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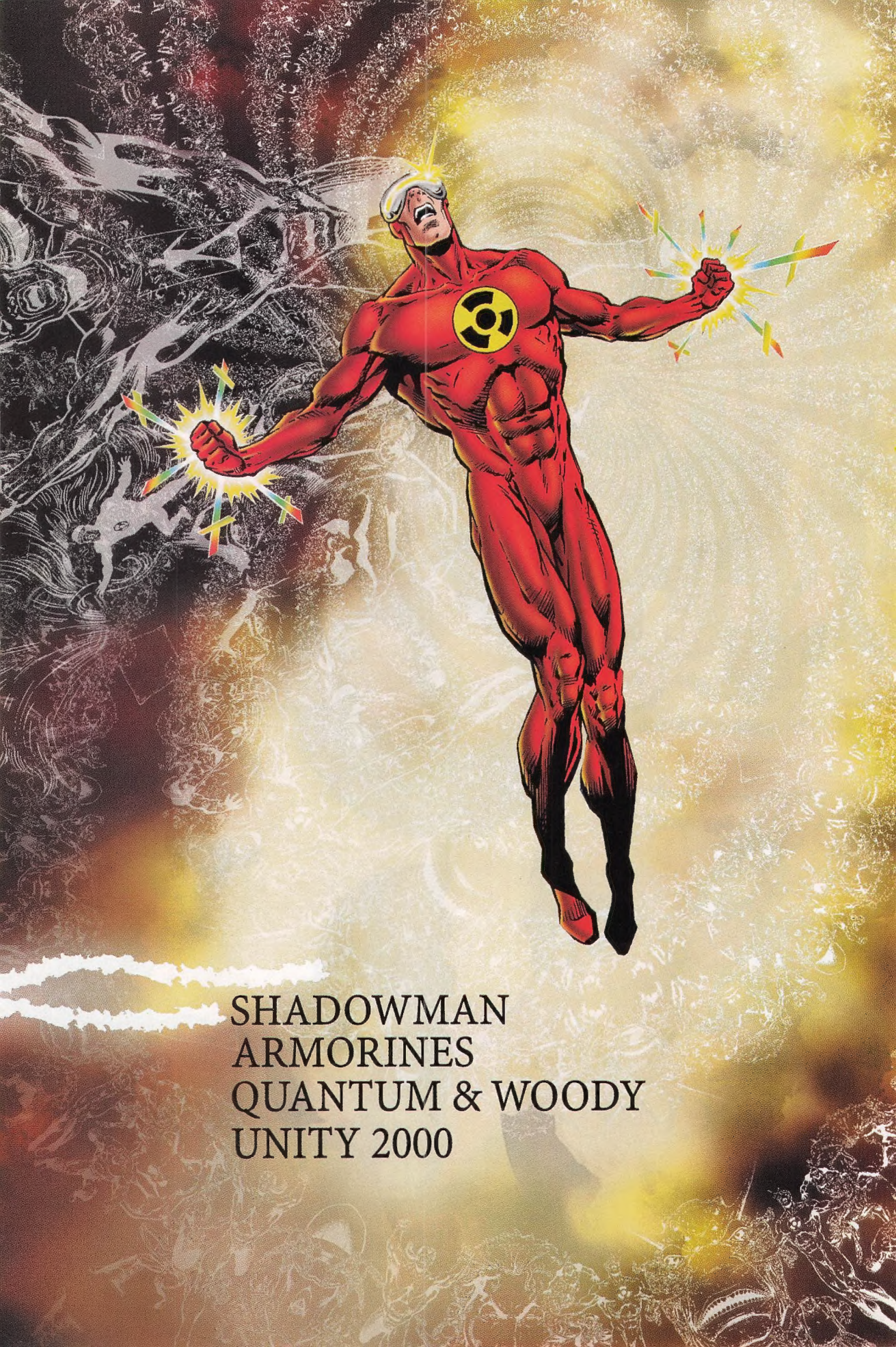
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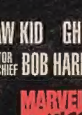

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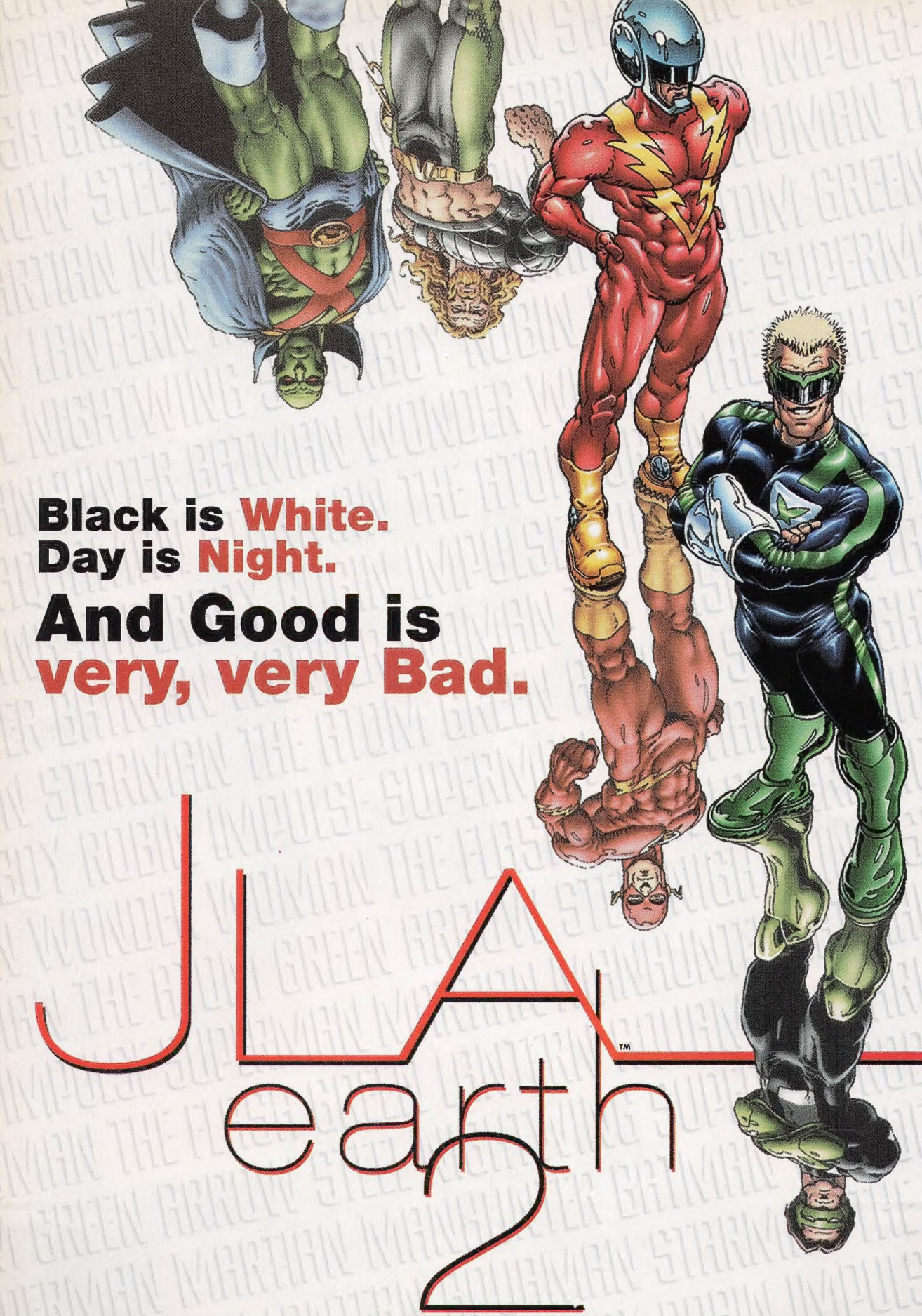
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gxi 3381

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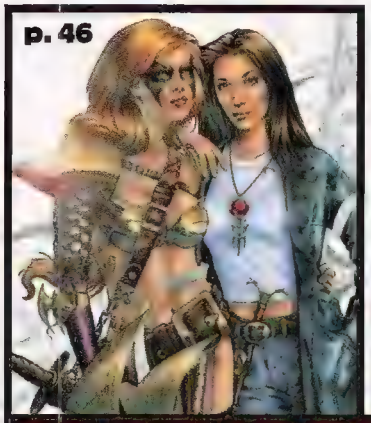

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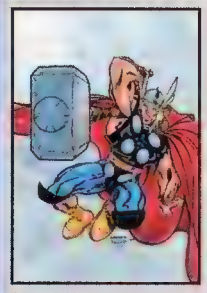

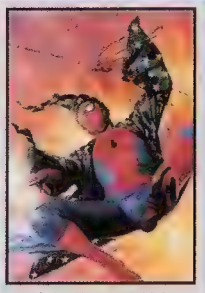

Thor (left) was penciled by our "Draw the *Wizard* #100 Cover Contest" winner Carlo Barberi, inked by Jimmy Palmiotti and colored by Liquid! Graphics. For more on Barberi, check out the expanded "Drawing Board" profiling him on page 124. Our **Spider-Man** cover (right) was painted by Alex Ross, and it wouldn't be a milestone issue without Spidey in a Wizard hat on the cover. Check out this entire book for the Year-End Wrap-Up!

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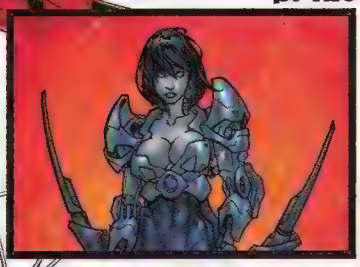

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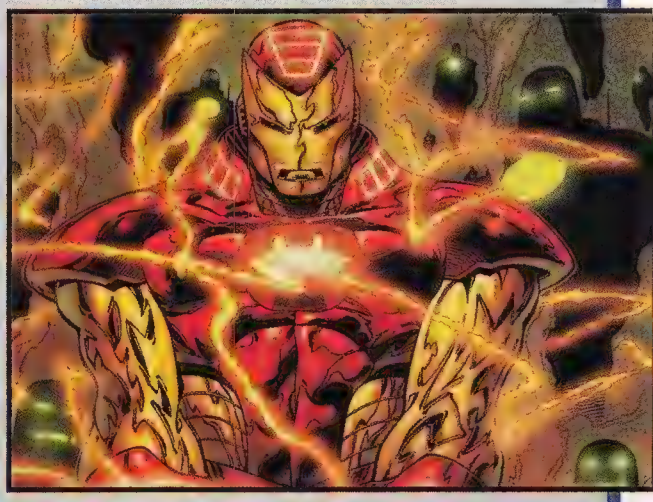

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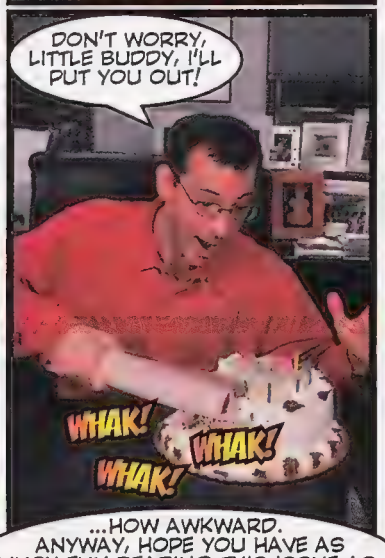

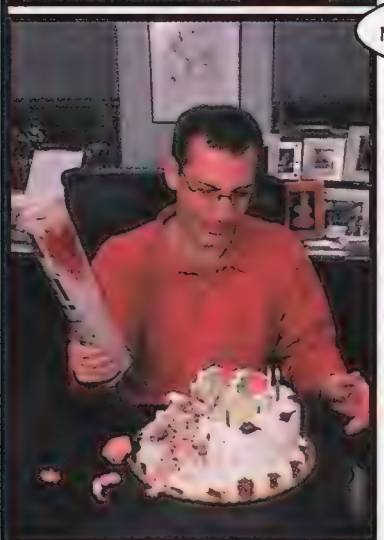

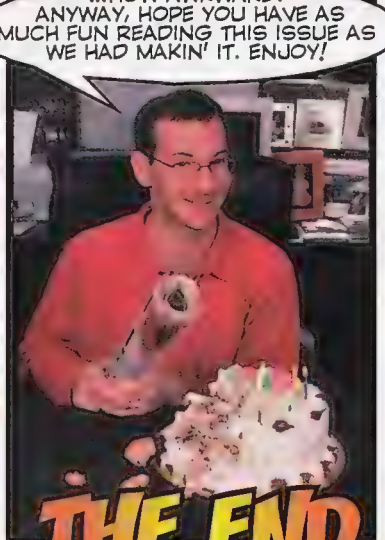

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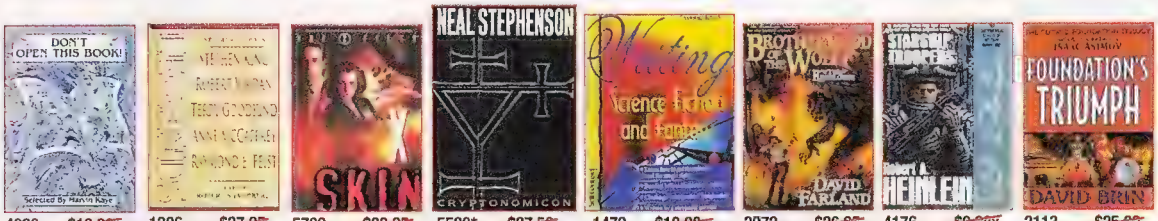

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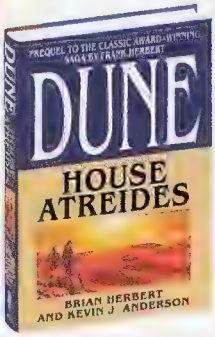

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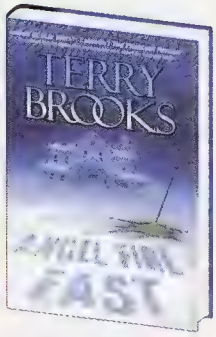

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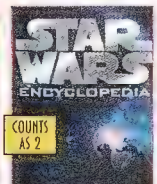

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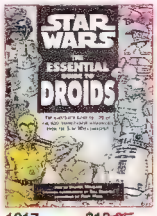

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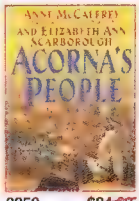

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MAGIC WORDS

SINS AGAINST PIZZA... FEELING UP SUPERMAN... ...AND SMOOCHING GEORGE PÉREZ!

Just to confirm, the rumors are true: I've ditched the Wizard office and dropped those losers I used to work with like a bad habit.

Yep. I've traded the polluted rivers and crowded sidewalks of New York for the polluted skies and crowded highways of Los Angeles! That means the spankin'-new *Wizard* West Coast office is up and running! If ya ever find yourself on L.A.'s glorious West Side, drop by and say, "Hi." And bring donuts. There's a new Krispy Kreme up in Van Nuys.

This auspicious occasion just happens to coincide with our heavy-as-a-brick Year End issue, and the all-pro "Magic Words" dripping with letters from your favorite comic writers, artists and assorted hangers-on. And just to show the double-laid-back, California kind of mood I'm in, I'm gonna let the letter writers take center stage while I rest up and keep my blather to a minimum.

After all, goin' surfing and lounging on the beach can take a lot out of a guy, ya know.

Dear Jim (Bunny Love) McLauchlin,

I just want to write and congratulate you on your move to the West Coast. I also want to warn you that there are a number of differences between the East Coast and La-La Land.

First things first: Food! The pizza in California sucks! Don't even try to argue with me. I'm an Italian from Brooklyn, so pizza is my birthright. In L.A., pizza is so bad they put pineapple on it to give it taste.

Second: Women. East Coast girls, for the most part, don't come with interchangeable plastic parts.

Third: Entertainment. Sure, L.A. is where movies are made, but give me a break! Last time I was there, the sanitation guy had an underdeveloped script about to be bought by a major studio! Over here we have real-life garbage men who want to stay garbage men, collect overtime and a pension, and retire to New Jersey.

Fourth: Comic book people. East Coast writers and artists work for a living. West Coast talent? I call guys there at 1:00 in the afternoon and get the "you woke me up" crap all the time. Or that "time difference" fable they all tell.

So good luck in your new office, Jim. And see if you can teach those sun-worshipping, breast-implanted, bad-food-eating West Coast creators a thing or two.

Jimmy Palmiotti
Half-drunk spokesman for New York and *Daredevil* inker

First things first: Pineapple is indeed a sin against pizza. But we all know the world's best pizza comes from the Savoy Inn of Saint Paul, Minn. And you'd better believe it, or Governor Jesse Ventura will kick your ass.

Thanks for the tips. But do me a favor and don't write before noon anymore, huh? You woke me up.

HUH!? *WIZARD* RECEIVES ABOUT 1,500 LETTERS A MONTH, WHICH ALL END UP IN TO "MAGIC WORDS" GUY JIM MCLAUCHLIN'S HANDS. AFTER SOME QUICK CALCULATIN', IT SEEMS POOR JIM'S READ OVER 130,000 LETTERS DURING HIS TENURE.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

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Dear Jolly Green Jimbo,

I enjoyed "'Marvel'ous Island," the photo tour of Marvel's Island of Adventure theme park from *Wizard* #97. But how is it that you dwarf Spider-Man in the photos? I have several theories:

1) You're bulking up to audition for the part of Piotr Rasputin in the upcoming "X-Men" flick.

2) You've been eating your Wheaties (and White Castle sliders).

3) This is your press photo for the new movie, "Stan, Honey, I Shrunk the Spider-Man!"

So which, if any, is right?

Adam Kubert
Fellow White Castle aficionado and regular irregular *Uncanny X-Men* penciler

None of the above. The fact of the matter is that I'm just an overly studly man, rippling with muscle and sinew, the object of all women's affections. Mere superheroes pale in comparison!

Man, that California sun is hot. I think it's heating up the metal plate in my head and giving me delusions of grandeur.

Jim,

There are times when we have to wonder just what damaged your brain. "Magic Words" in *Wizard* #98 is one of these times.

Comics "wouldn't be around today in their present form" if not for Spider-Man? Good gosh, man, do the folks at Marvel come to your house and tuck you into bed at night? Yes, Spider-Man is a popular character, but turn left at Pismo Beach and you won't find a fraction of folks on this planet who even have heard of the wall-crawler when compared to the big red "S."

Don't get me wrong. I'm a *huge* Spidey fan. But Superman is the first, last and best superhero of all. Every character you could mention is a "version" of Pa Kent's son. Who is Peter Parker other than a teenage Clark Kent? How far does anyone have to look to see a comparison between the Daily Planet and Daily Bugle? Uncle Ben and Aunt May? Gee, guess Ma and Pa Kent weren't available that day! The list goes on.

And as to "revolutionizing the comics industry," sorry, but that mighty effort belongs to Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and what was once "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine"—*Fantastic Four*. Stan and Jack took a formula which had been very successful in *Justice League* (which in turn was derived from Superman) and added bickering and angst and all that "real human stuff" that made Spider-Man a success...two years later.

So in conclusion: Superman—the best. Spider-Man—good character. Fantastic Four—saved Marvel as we know it. Spawn—ah, who cares. Beau Smith—funny guy.

Jeph Loeb
Funny guy in his own right and writer of (*ahem*) *Superman*

I dig Superman myself when properly done, and Loeb is doin' a proper job, in my not-so-humble opinion. But I still contend that at a time when Supes was stopping bank robbers and having Lois Lane come *this* close to figuring out his secret identity every month in formulaic stories, Spider-Man came along and breathed fresh air into a comic world desperately in need of some CPR. Maybe it's a generational difference, but Superman has always seemed to me like Your Father's Oldsmobile, while Spidey has been a Mustang convertible. I'll take the Mustang, thank you very much.

But hey, Loeb has a valid argument. And everyone has the right to an opinion. Even guys who live right of Pismo Beach.

Dearest Magic Words,

The only thing worse than having some big-mouth tear you a new ass for something stupid you said is to have some big-mouth tear you a new ass for something you *didn't* say!

Harlan Ellison puts the pontificating statement, "I'm going to do with *Aquaman* what has never been done in the history of literature before!" in my mouth in a *Wizard* #97 interview, then promptly blasts at me for saying the very words *he* put there! I didn't say what he said that I said.

I'm guessing that Harlan somehow feels I've slighted his buddy Peter David and he's coming to Peter's defense. While I do find that admirable, I don't care for his methods. There were never any slams directed at Peter in any statements I made in regard to *Aquaman*, or in the work itself. Yes, a clever guy like Harlan can read in all kinds of dastardly doings between the lines if he puts his mind to it, but in all honesty, such was not my intent.

Besides, Peter and I have pretty much patched things up. There's no need to take sides. And if there is, my support group, F.O.O.L. (Friends Of Ol' Larsen) can lick damn near anybody.

Erik Larsen
Now former *Aquaman* writer, still chuggin' on with 71 consecutive issues of *Savage Dragon*

Boy, if there's one buncha guys I don't wanna be licked by, it's friends of Erik Larsen.

Magic Words,

Hey, DC! Here's why your comics aren't selling!

After Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* came out—arguably the best book of its kind for 10 years in either direction—and became a massive hit, thence began the gloomification of DC. Hal Jordan becomes a murdering psychopath. Batman is just about as dark and deranged as the criminals he pursues. You name it, DC did it...which tells me that you learned the wrong lessons from *Dark Knight*.

The reason *Dark Knight* succeeded was because of the contrasts: light *and* dark in equal opposition. There was a compassion there, toward the new Robin, toward fallen comrades, toward mad Gotham City, even toward Superman. There was heart amid the darkness. DC has forgotten that aspect in its rush to make its books Serious Literature. Dark and depressing ain't necessarily more or less literary than anything else.

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

HUH!? BEFORE THEY WERE STARS, ARTISTS MARAT MYCHAELS, LEINIL F. YU, JEFF MATSUDA AND JACK GRAY ALL WON WIZARD'S "LETTER ART" OR "DRAWING BOARD" CONTESTS.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

I grew up with DC. Cared about the characters. It was painful to watch their gradual but increasing deconstruction. I want to be able to watch those characters live out their passions and their adventures, and for those titles to be successful. I don't want them to be stuck in one mold forever...but I do want them to be heroes with compassion to equal their rage.

You had 50 years of some of the best comics characters and books in history. You screwed it up. But that doesn't mean you can't get it back. Start writing books about heroes who care again. The audience will come.

J. Michael Straczynski
Writer of *Rising Stars*

It would appear that Mr. Straczynski practices what he preaches. *Rising Stars* is bleak as hell in parts, seriously uplifting in others. There's a whole lotta darkness going on, but a lotta light to go with it. And if sales and reaction on the first couple of issues are any indication, the audience is coming.

Dear Wizard,

I get to tell stories for a living. That's something I'm proud of, and something I do my best to respect. Stories, imagination, make-believe...we're raised to believe these are frivolous pursuits, diversions to fill up the gaps of life. Not so. Storytelling is as indispensable to being human as eating or breathing. Five minutes after man discovered fire, someone started telling a story around it. And there's a direct line from caveman Quig-Mug telling the tale of "The Great Boar Hunt" to today's kid reading *Batman* under the covers with a flashlight. That's a pretty cool tradition to be part of. We're all very lucky, those of us who work in this industry. These are interesting times. They deserve interesting stories. Let's not let old Quig-Mug down.

Brian Holguin
Writer of *Spawn, Aria, KISS: The Psycho Circus*

Yeah, 'cause if you do, ol' Quig-Mug will crack you over the head with that big caveman club of his.

Jim,

If Superman can punch a hole in solid rock and not skin a knuckle, what must his skin feel like? I would think you could not wrinkle his skin by touching it, so shaking his hand would feel like gripping a warm statue, right? Just imagine what this must be like for Lois Lane when she kisses him. It must feel like kissing the hood of a car or something. I mean, am I wrong? So why didn't anybody at the *Daily Planet* ever comment on Clark Kent's weird handshake?

KYRA K. KAUSCHEL
Age: 18 Sex: Female
1007 E. Rundberg Lane #132
Austin, TX 78753
Likes: X-titles, *Gambit*, anime

SONYA "REED" RICHARDS
Age: 16 Sex: Female
Burmanlaan 22
2241 JG Wassenaar
The Netherlands
Likes: *Lenore, Girl Scouts*

THOMAS DU
Age: 18 Sex: Male
1336 Dakota Road
Bellefontaine, OH 43311
Likes: *Generation X, Johnny the Homicidal Maniac*

ANNA ATKINS
Age: 18 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 419
Crawford, MS 39743-0419
Likes: Batman titles, Spidey titles, *Scooby Doo*

NICHOLAS BRYANT
Age: 20 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 114
Currituck, NC 27929
Likes: GWAR, Rifts RPG, X-Men

DON "JUAN" VAUGHN
Age: 23 Sex: Male
Box 98008674
885 N. San Pedro
San Jose, CA 95110
Likes: Marvel, Image

JEFF HARSH
Age: 24 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 540
St. Clairsville, OH 43950
Likes: Spider-Man, X-Men, and *Wolverine*

Now, about Johnny Storm's ability to catch fire and still have hair...

Terry Moore
Writer, artist and even letterer of *Strangers in Paradise*

Clark Kent's hands *used* to feel eerily hard and inhuman. Then he started using Palmolive, the dishwashing liquid that moisturizes as it cleans. Now everyone at the *Daily Planet* wants to shake his hand!

Dear Magic Words:

It's the 100th issue of *Wizard* magazine and so much has changed!

The top-selling books in America are...X-Men
John Byrne is drawing...the X-Men
Chris Claremont is writing...the X-Men
Rob Liefeld is drawing...*Cable*
George Pérez is at Marvel drawing...*Avengers*
Jim Shooter is even rumored to have a new comic company in the works!

And last I checked, midnight is still *The Witching Hour*, and creators would still do anything to plug their books. Hey—"It's Evolution, Baby!" (Tagline and unabashed plug for *Steampunk*.)

Chris Bachalo
Artist of *The Witching Hour, Steampunk*

And I hear there's a new *Youngblood* #1 coming down the pike and every geek in America is *still* waiting for a "Spider-Man" movie. Guess the old saying is true: The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Dear Magic Jim,

I'm curious—do you Einsteins at *Wizard* know if there is a correlation between the size of a person's head and the size of their ego? I'm currently collecting information for my tell-all exposé on the inner workings of an insane profession.

Ron Garney
Penciler of the now-*Incredible Hulk*; former collaborator with John Byrne

As we speak, buried miles underground and protected by steel-reinforced concrete walls, *Wizard*-backed research into just that question is taking place at a top-secret installation.

The installation? We call it the Byrne ward.

Dear Wizard,

Well, I didn't see an Invisible Woman Halloween costume this year. But I would like to thank Red Sonja, Catwoman and Vampirella for stopping by. Halloween is the friendliest time of the year!

Jim Balent
Creator of *Tarot: Witch of the Black Rose*

Hmmm. Chain-mail bikinis, skintight spandex and red dental floss for costumes. I think I'll move to Jim Balent's neighborhood. Definitely puts the "treat" in "trick-or-treat."

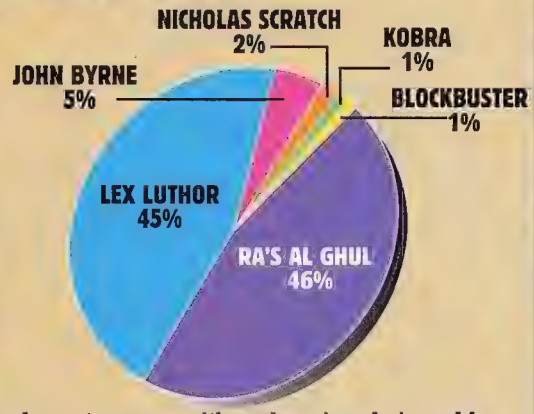
Dear Wizard,

When Kurt Busiek won the "Favorite Writer" *Wizard* Fan Award at this year's Wizard World Chicago con, he got a big, wet smooch on the lips from George Pérez. I was a

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHICH VILLAIN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR "NO MAN'S LAND"?



Who knew two guys with such serious hair problems could wreak such havoc in Gotham City?

Tuft-headed Ra's Al Ghul edged out bald Supernemesis Lex Luthor by only one percent in our online poll (wizardworld.com). Most voters pointed out that with all the destruction in Gotham, it had to be someone who really knew how to make a mess.

"He's *the* apocalypse guy. He just needed to create the perfect situation to begin the destruction," one fanboy said of Ra's. "Destroying Gotham City is a great way to begin."

Surprisingly, the most write-in votes went to writer/artist John Byrne. Many voters were sure he had to be behind Gotham's destruction, since no comic villain has ever wrecked a book as easily as he has.

"My God," exclaimed a fan. "To think that a comic book character could be that disastrous...? It has to be continuity-wrecking legend JOHN BYRNE!"

MIKE COTTON

CRAIG KING	CORNEKIS MIMS	LADY BRUJAH	JASON "ARCHIE" HODGE	THEODORE LOGAN JR.	ROGERIO VIEIRA	NATHAN FLORES
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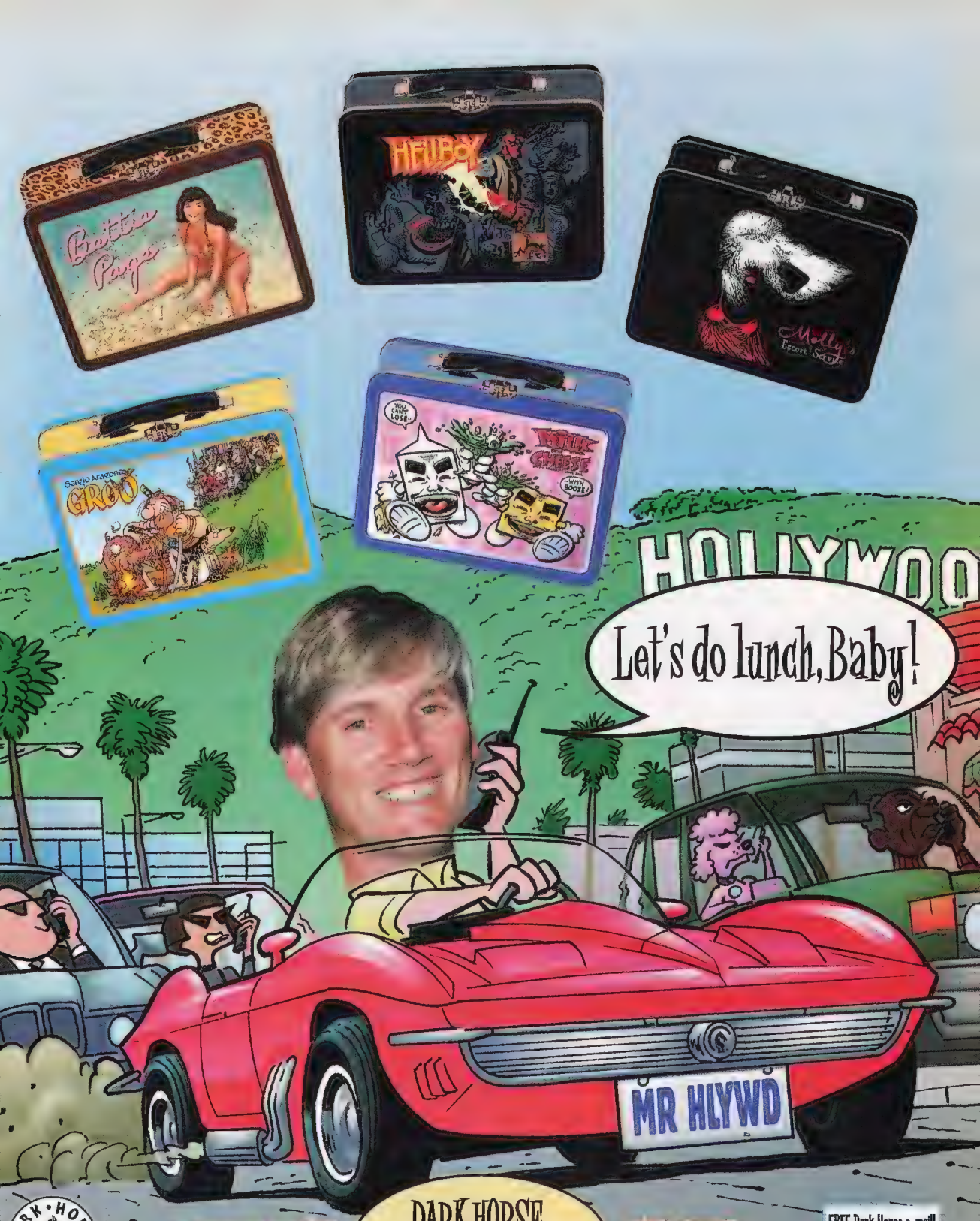
Cincinnati, OH 45238	Pascagoula, MS 39581	Gilbert, AZ 85233	Indianapolis, IN	Johns Island, SC 29455	Santos-SP BRAZIL	Mission, TX 78572
Likes: Dragonball titles, JLA titles, Star Trek	Likes: *Dragon Ball Z, Crimson*, Wizard (kiss-ass.)	Likes: *Witchblade, The Darkness, Venom*	Likes: Spider-Man, *The Tick*, and Superman	Likes: X-Men, Spider-Man, *Wolverine*	Likes: *Titans, JLA*, soccer	Likes: X-Men, *X-Man*, X-Files, Xylophones, x-rays

HUH!? PRISON MAIL! *WIZARD* ONCE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM RANDY SAYER, THE INCARCERATED "VAMPIRE KILLER" OF ST. CLOUD, MINN.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...



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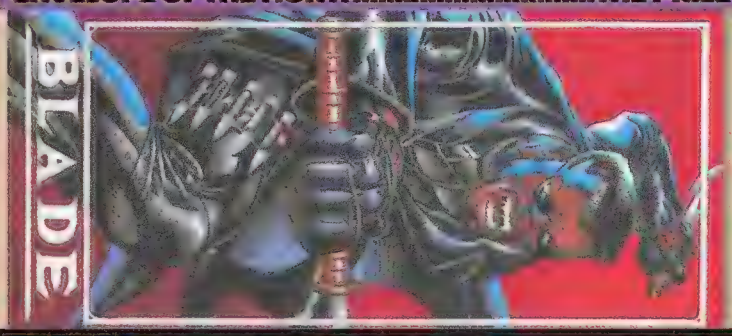
LETTER ART

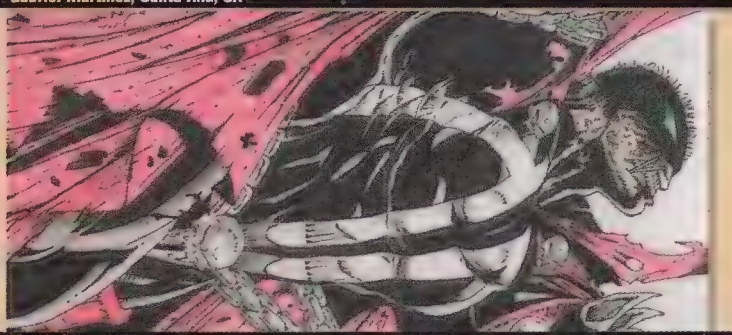
Each fan has his or her letter art printed this month wins a copy of this month's issure of Wizard signed by the entire Wizard creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope will win an incredible mini-bust of the Hulk from Bowen Designs. Prizes for this contest have been generously donated by the fine folks at Bowen Designs. Man, it'd be great if they would work up a bust of Frog-Man. It would leap off the shelves! (Get it... Frog-Man...leap!) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of the envelope. Aquaman says, "Jump in the water so I can kick your ass!"

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE



BLADE Christopher Stevens, Savannah, GA

WOLVERINE, DEADPOOL AND HUMAN TORCH
Gabriel Martinez, Santa Ana, CA



SPAWN William V. Cayetano Bayambang, Pangasian, PHILIPPINES

THE SCARLET WITCH PROJECT Nicholas Baltra Brandon, FL

nominee for that award.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those fans who *didn't* vote for me.

Mark Waid
Writer of *Flash, JLA* and something called *Gatecrasher*

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER

Not to worry, Mark—your lips would have remained safe. Pérez, who was the presenter for the award, kissed Busiek 'cause he's his *Avengers* collaborator/buddy. If you would have won? "I would have kissed Mark's girlfriend instead," Pérez says.

Well, that's a wrap. By the time we start getting letters about large bearded men playing tonsil hockey, you know it's time to turn out the lights. Until next month, I remain...

–Jim McLauchlin

If you don't neuter your Jim McLauchlin while he's young, he'll continue to spray throughout his life. First to attract the female of the species, and later, just out of habit.

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HUH!? WE'VE HAD A NUMBER OF NOTABLE *WIZARD* LETTER-WRITERS OVER THE YEARS, INCLUDING: BEN DOVER OF SPRING VALLEY, N.Y. (#1), REED RICHARDS (#14) AND THE SPIDER-CLONE (#43).
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

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Give us your tired, your poor, your new writer of three X-books

Looks like a new broom *does* sweep clean. And even the dustiest corners of Marvel's X-Men universe are getting swept.

One month after news broke that 17-year X-veteran Chris Claremont was returning to write *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* in March, Marvel announced a second layer of X-restructuring. Writer Warren Ellis will also use March to revamp three secondary books—*Generation X*, *X-Force* and *X-Man*—under an umbrella Marvel is calling "Counter X."

"I want to really inject these books with a new creative energy," said editor Jason Liebig. Even though all three sell well, Liebig felt, "We need to hit that thing that captures people's imaginations."

Ellis, who has grown strong cult followings on *Transmetropolitan* and *Planetary*, is a likely candidate to do just that. And he agrees that the books have been adrift. "All three are considered to be somewhat directionless," Ellis said. "I get the feeling that Marvel's looking for something that moves aggressively. I can be an aggressive fellow."

Ellis' aggression starts with *Generation X* #63, *X-Force* #102 and *X-Man* #63. "The job I've been handed is to re-imagine and redirect these books. That's the sum total," Ellis relayed. "Right now, I'm writing new series guides for each book with new direction, new status quo and new plotlines. They will eventually be given to new creative teams that I will have a hand in selecting."

Liebig said the plan is for Ellis to write the first four issues of each book, then hand them off to "permanent writers that can work with him and work under his plan." All writers will be new. "You have to come with a sweeping change," Liebig said. "Otherwise readers will say, 'Okay, so it's all new...with the same old creative team? No.' I wouldn't believe it either." Specifics include:

• ***Generation X.*** The tale of mutant students learning to master their powers at Emma Frost's Massachusetts Academy "really doesn't seem to move," in Ellis' words. "There are just these little vignettes of life at school. So the Academy will change hands, and become a very different place in the process." Down the line, Liebig indicated that Brian Wood (*Channel Zero*) has the inside track to become new *Generation X* writer.

• ***X-Force.*** "X-Force will have

ELLIS PHOTO BY STEPHEN ELLISON; DICAPRIO PHOTO BY JEFF SLOCHMA, COURTESY OF OUTLINE.

HUH!? IN ISSUE #14, *WIZARD'S* (NOT-SO-CRYSTAL) CRYSTAL BALL PREDICTED "VALIANT STANDS POISED TO BECOME ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT EXPLORERS OF THE GREAT UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY OF THE FUTURE." OOOPS.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

a redefined role," Ellis promised. "They're no longer this slow, maturing group. They'll be fast-moving, aggressive." They'll also have a new leader, one who Ellis called, "the last character you'd expect to be running a team. Moreso than Devil Dinosaur. Worse, too. I expect half the fans will love it, and the other half will be inclined to throw stones at me." Jae Lee (*Inhumans*) has been approached to become *X-Force* cover artist, although no new writer is imminent.

• ***X-Man.*** Ellis stated that Nate Grey, the alternate-reality telekinetic mutant, will be, "the most radically reinvented." Frequent DC cover artist Tim Bradstreet is doing a redesign that Ellis says will give X-Man, "the 'James Dean on crack' thing he should have had from the start. He'll actually look *good*." The entire concept of the character will be rethought before Steven Grant (*Punisher* mini-series) becomes the new *X-Man* writer.

Liebig said that new logos for the trio of books will also be explored, but stressed that this is *not* a universe unto itself. "There won't be a tight, gotta-read-them-all link between books, but there will be some connectivity."

Ellis agreed. "I think of them as having thematic links, but not continuity links. I like things to be able to stand in their own little worlds. Otherwise, what's the point? I will provide each with its own distinctive identity."

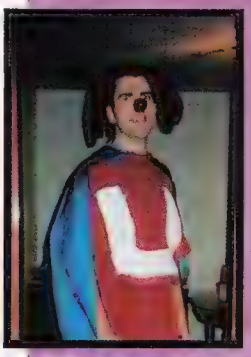
Is "Counter X" a counter to the big events in the core X-books? Liebig and Ellis say no. "Warren is really on a roll right now, and he's doing stuff with a lot of great, wild ideas," Liebig said. "It's just good luck that we could get him in now."

Ellis said it's a little more than that. "I told Jason back when I did *Wolverine* [for a four-issue run in 1998] that he could count on me for one more X-project. This is me making good on that promise. I didn't think I'd have the chance to do three in the same month. But this is a drive to get things rebooted for the 21st century."

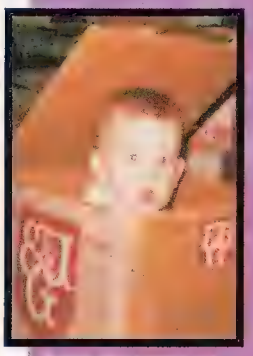
One cue Ellis will be taking from the core books: His March "Counter X" titles will skip ahead a short period in time. "Oh, yes!" he cackled. "The time element will be helpful in explaining some of these changes. Can't forget that!"

Change is what it's all about to Liebig. "I've been curious enough to pick up the Superman books lately," he said. "They've got some new and intriguing creators on them. That's what we want to do here. Whatever people think about Warren, or *Generation X*, or even Claremont or the X-Men or whatever—that will all change in March." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

Fat Kid declares war on baked goods. "Ho Hos are a superstitious, cowardly lot," mumbled doughy avenger before gorging himself on sheetcake.



National ad campaign to get 30-year-olds to move out of their parents' basements gets new spokesman. "I'm Dave," said Dave.



Bobble-Boy funding cut, now "Corrugated Cardboard Box-Boy, fan-club dwindles. "...gurgle..." said child before succumbing to common, everyday viruses.

LEADINGCANDIDATES

THE INSIDE SCOOP

Warren Ellis will not reveal the new X-Force leader. But he did shoot down a few names thrown at him:

WOLVERINE

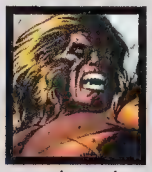
REASON WHY: The longtime X-member has battle experience. And hey–he's the most commercial character Marvel has.

ELLIS' WHY NOT: "A good teacher, but not a good leader, unless you want to set the next 100 issues in a bar. Which is okay by me, but [Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Bob Harras might complain."

MYSTIQUE

REASON WHY: She's the former leader of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants and Freedom Force...and starring in the upcoming X-movie.

ELLIS' WHY NOT: "Mystique should be President, with a multisexual film-star harem at her beck and call. Running an X-team is, quite honestly, below her."



SABRETOOTH

REASON WHY: The savage villain is a former X-Force member, and always a crowd-pleaser among the fans.

ELLIS' WHY NOT: "Are we still on the 'You have slaughtered, cooked and eaten over a thousand people. But we can rehabilitate you!' kick? I'd empty a gun into his face."

QUICKSILVER

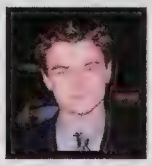
REASON WHY: He's not starring anywhere now, and with years of experience, this mutant speedster has been *ahem* around the block a few times.

ELLIS' WHY NOT: "No. Imagine this: 'Gather round, X-Force, while I tell you the plan. But first, let me tell you about my divorce again....'"

DARK BEAST

REASON WHY: An escapee from the mega-popular "Age of Apocalypse," Dark Beast is a cool character and master manipulator.

ELLIS' WHY NOT: "He's been living in a sewer for *five years* now. This guy couldn't run a bath, let alone a team."



LEONARDO DICAPRIO

REASON WHY: Chicks dig him. They liked that "Titanic" flick.

ELLIS' WHY NOT: "His only mutant ability is to remake the entire movie industry in his own 12-year-old image. But this could be the secret to quadrupling *X-Force* sales." ■ JM

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

OUTED *The Authority*'s Midnighter and Apollo

WELCOME TO...THE ELLISVERSE? The most coveted writer in comics? These days it looks like Warren Ellis. The *Planetary* scribe is revamping Marvel's secondary X-books, and now we hear WildStorm is willing to give him his *own line*, much like the company did for Alan Moore. Ellis has also reportedly been talking to the Marvel Knights team about the possibility of joining his buddies Garth Ennis and Grant Morrison for a short, non-superhero MK project. Ellis has also outed two of his *Authority* characters, Apollo and The Midnighter. Ellis said the two heroes were, "in the debased English parlance, up each other. So what?"

FANTASTIC PACHECO! Well-placed spies say that star artist Carlos Pacheco renewed his exclusive contract with Marvel *before* his old term was even up. What could make Pacheco jump like that? Maybe a chance to take a crack at his all-time faves, the Fantastic Four...?

FABIAN'S MAGNETISM Writer Fabian Nicieza will get a chance to show off his magnetic personality with *Magneto: Heaven and Earth*, a three-issue series set to hit stores in the coming months. No artist has been named yet.

RING IN THE OLD! Marvel had huge hits with the retro-style *X-Men: Children of the Atom* and the straight-outta-1963 *Avengers* #1 1/2. Now word comes outta the House of Ideas that a retro-Fantastic Four tale is on the launching pad.

DARKER IMAGES! Word from California is that the next all-Image crossover falls to Top Cow, and the 'Cow is leaning toward something featuring "Medieval" incarnations of all the characters.

LEX LUTHOR, SAVIOR? Stolen glances at DC covers show a well-known bald guy in a hard hat. Don't be surprised if Lex Luthor plays a prominent role in the rebuilding of earthquake-ravaged Gotham City.

BACK INTO THE WOODS! There's something scary out there, but Oni Press has no fear of Burkittsville, Maryland! The publisher did so well with its *Blair Witch Project* comic that rumor holds it's lookin' to do a series of sequels.

LADRÓNN'S INHUMANS RACE José Ladrónn's picking up where Jae Lee leaves off. Sources report Ladrónn is set to pencil a four-issue *Inhumans* mini-series for Marvel Knights in 2000. Word has it the mini-series will mark the writing debut of Carlos Pacheco.

GREEN ENGAGEMENT RING? *Green Lantern* writer Ron Marz confirms current GL Kyle Rayner will get married to his live-in girlfriend, Jade, in issue #121 this December.

ARIA CODE *Aria*'s getting tweaked. Writer Brian Holguin's comic will become a series of mini-series, with different artists working on different storyarcs. While artist Jay Anacleto will still be involved doing covers, don't be surprised to see interior art by the likes of Mark Texeira and Bill Sienkiewicz.

THEY SAID IT

IDLE CHATTER

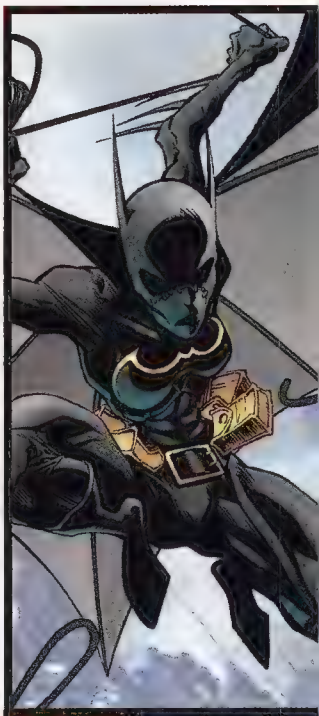
"If you want two-part stories about what superheroes put on their shopping trolleys or multi-parters about who's dating whom behind their ex-girlfriend's back, then you can bugger off."
—**MARK MILLAR**, on his action-packed approach to *The Authority*

'GIRL WATCHIN'

New Batgirl rolls into town—saying little and crackin' heads

There's a new Batgirl in town and she's one bad-ass-mamma-jamma!

"The book is dark," co-writer Kelly Puckett said of the new ongoing *Batgirl* series debuting in February. "She's more like Batman than any other character. She's more like Batman than Nightwing, Robin, Huntress or any other character. This is going to be dark, action oriented — what you'd expect from a kick-ass Batman book."



HIT THE MUTE She may not say much, but she sure packs a wallop!

While action will be a constant in the book, Puckett and co-writer, and former *Detective Comics* editor Scott Peterson will focus on fleshing out the character too. The new Batgirl, who has only spoken one word since killing a man as a child, won't speak for awhile, but Puckett said her inability to vocalize will be a major focus of the book.

"She's going to do her best to learn how to speak but it won't be a first three issues kind of story. It'll take a while," Puckett said.

Batgirl's advanced combat training makes her Batman's enforcer for street-level crime, but she won't be using the Batcave. Instead, the 17-year-old will be living with Oracle, the former Batgirl, who takes on the responsibility of teaching her the lines between Batgirl and regular life.

Batman is fine with just using Batgirl as a tool against crime but it will become evident Oracle thinks Batgirl should spend less time fighting crime and more time working on human interaction.

Other major developments will start as Cain, the man who trained the new Batgirl to be an assassin, returns to take back his pupil and Batman finally learns his new Batgirl is a killer.

"Batman didn't know she was a killer when he made her Batgirl," Puckett said. "If he had known, things would have been different."

Puckett also said you won't see any involved crime dramas in the pages of *Batgirl*.

"She's not going to be going out and solving crimes, Puckett said. "Her skills are very specific and that's that she can kick anybody's ass. And that's pretty much all she does." ■ **MIKE COTTON**

MILLAR PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK MILLAR

HUH!? *WIZARD* #1 WAS THE *ONLY* ISSUE OF *WIZARD* HELD TOGETHER BY STAPLES. SINCE THEN WE'VE SWITCHED TO WHAT'S CALLED PERFECT BOUND. YOU MIGHT SAY WE'VE BEEN PERFECT EVER SINCE

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

Mark Alessi
Mike Atiyeh
Michael Beattie
James Breitbeil
Claudio Castellini
Jim Cheung
Andrew Crossley
Pam Davies
John Dell
Ian M. Feller
Sarah Fuhrman
Don Hillsman
Barbara Kesel
Ben Lai
Ray Lai
Ron Marz
Steve McNiven
Joshua Middleton
Laura Mittler
Tiffany Moncada
Brandon Peterson
Ceasar Rodriguez
Dan Shadian
John Smith
Gina Villa
Dexter Vines
Beth Widera

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LASTWRITES

OH, GOD! BOOK 4

Oh, rapture. Jesus Christ's coming back next year, and he's got creation on his mind.

Using skills honed composing classics like the "Sermon on the Mount," the big J.C.'s shared writing chores with Jimmy R. Smith on a new Dark Horse comic entitled *The Truth*. Christ's always been a trend-setter, and we here at *Wizard* can't help but think other religious folk might follow God's only begotten son into the world of comic publishing. Here's how they could do it:

JIM BAKKER ***PREACHER***

It's got sex, lies and comedy. In other words, *Preacher*'s got Bakker's name written all over it. Added bonus–Bakker's a Southerner, so he could undoubtedly nail Jesse Custer's twang dead on. Now in terms of experience with inbred, homicidal nut jobs...um, never mind.

DALAI LAMA ***RESURRECTION MAN***

What could be better karma for DC than hiring a reincarnation specialist to revive the company's perpetually-reborn hero? Plus, he might be able to rope fellow Buddhist Richard Gere into playing dear old Mitch Ryder in the major motion picture.

EVE ANYTHING BY TOP COW

The first woman (and greatest temptress in history) had to be a pretty hot babe–after all, she covered her privates with nothing but a fig leaf! She's the obvious choice to write Top Cow's voluptuous, scantily-clad female characters. Figs, anyone?

DAVID KORESH ***FIRESTORM***

In the Waco cult leader's hands, a revamped Firestorm would be more than just a fire elemental–he'd be the god of fiery death, delivering his burning form of holy retribution straight to the United States government. Look's like Janet Reno's gettin' a brimstone enema.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
INSANE CLOWN POSSE

Just think about it for a minute. Insane Pope Posse. If that doesn't get you excited about comics, well...to hell with you. ■ **THE REV. MIKE COTTON**

OOPS...

WE SUCK

"Eltingville" comic strips have appeared in *Dork!* #3, #4 and #6, but not #5 as was reported in *Wizard* #99.

Nelson provided the art for *Wizard* #2000's "Portfolio 101" feature.

SPIDER-GIRL SWINGS ALONE

MC2 future uncertain after 'Wild Thing,' 'Fantastic Five' axed

Spider-Girl's gonna sling solo. Marvel MC2 titles *Wild Thing* and *Fantastic Five* head to the chopping block after December's issues, leaving Peter Parker's perky daughter the sole survivor of the MC2 Universe.

"It was a surprise to us," MC2 editor Tom DeFalco said of the decision to pull the plug on the two titles. "From what we gathered, the first two issues (of *Fantastic Five* and *Wild Thing*) sold out instantly."

Despite the cancellation of two-thirds of the line, DeFalco said *Spider-Girl* will "keep going, business as usual." But does "business as usual" mean DeFalco will continue to write MC2's most popular title?

"I guess," he said. "For now."

MC2 began last year, a three-title line set in an alternate reality future. *Spider-Girl* blossomed into a runaway hit, and *A-Next* and *J2* enjoyed a fair amount of popularity. Even so, both *A-Next* and *J2* were canceled, replaced by the shorter-lived *Wild Thing* and *Fantastic Five*.

"We originally had three titles because it was supposed to be three in a bag to go to Wal-Mart, Kmart and that sort of stuff," DeFalco said. "We were aiming to get into the mass market, to produce accessible comic books to hook new people onto the hobby.

"For reasons that still befuddle the heck out of me, we ended up strictly in the direct market, which is where we were never supposed to be."

The MC2 line isn't totally dead, though, as DeFalco will write *The Buzz*, an all-new, monthly book tied in to *Spider-Girl*.

"The mighty Marvel works in mysterious ways," DeFalco said. The new book stars a member of *Spider-Girl*'s supporting cast, though DeFalco won't say who. Look for the two titles to play off one another and share supporting casts, but have individual storylines. *The Buzz* is set for release this spring. ■ **CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE**

SPLITSVILLE When do two halves make a hole? When it's my butt!

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF AP PHOTO (BAKER BY WADE PAYNE, LAMA BY ANI GIVON, POPE BY ERIC DRAPER)

HUH!? WITH 10 COVERS AND TWO DIFFERENT NAMES TO HIS CREDIT, BART SEARS WINS THE COVETED TITLE OF *WIZARD* COVER ARTIST EXTRAORDINAIRE. OF HIS 10 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE, 7 WERE ACTUALLY AS SEARS, 3 WERE AS THE PSEUDONYMOUS WITTMAN.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

PREPARE TO RISK EVERYTHING.
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RISK
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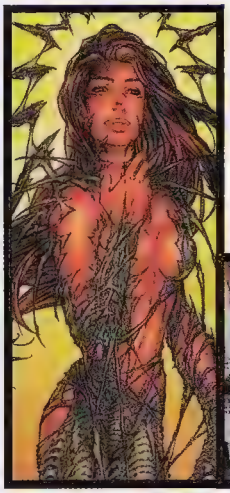
TRADING PLACES AT TOP COW

Artist Cha jumps to 'Witchblade', Zanier hops on 'Rising Stars'



Get ready for some Cow tipping. Or at least a little shaking.

Two of Top Cow's most successful books — *Rising Stars* and *Witchblade*—will be getting new pencilers. However, look no farther than the Top Cow stable for the replacements.

Christian Zanier (*Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*; *Tales of the Witchblade*) will take over J. Michael Straczynski's runaway hit *Rising Stars* from Keu Cha.

Cha, who has generated a buzz for his work on the book, will grab hold of Sara Pezzini, assuming the reins on *Witchblade* in April, Top Cow's flagship title and most recognizable series.

Cha said the move wasn't up to him but he's excited about the chance.

"I think Straczynski wanted a different look for the book from the beginning," Cha said. "But I'm glad to be working on a book like *Witchblade*."

Cha doesn't plan on any major character changes for *Witchblade* but his style will look significantly different than departing artist Randy Green.

"I'm looking forward to playing with the characters but I really haven't been able to decide what I'm going to do yet," said Cha.

Green will take some time off from comics but might be back to do future special projects, according to Top Cow insiders. ■ MC

GIVING GOTHAM A NEW LOOK

New wheels, fresh threads has Batman stylin' in 2000

A Bat-Ferrari. A military-style Gotham police force. A "Year One" outfitted Batman. Sound like an Elseworlds tale? Well, it's not—welcome to the new Gotham City.

This January the new Bat-art squad, including Scott McDaniel and Elliot Brown, are ready to show you a Gotham you never expected.

"The new look of Gotham is future gothic," *Batman* editor Darren Vincenzo said. "It looks a little cleaner but no one's going to mistake this place for Metropolis.

"After a while you'll look and see the shadows are just as dark, if not darker — there'll be just as much corruption, danger and ill will."

Everything in Gotham is getting an overhaul, from city hall to Wayne Manor. The art team has created new monuments and landmarks as well as an entirely redesigned downtown.

Gotham isn't the only thing changing though. The Gotham police force will get new uniforms, with a closer resemblance to military garb than their standard uniforms.

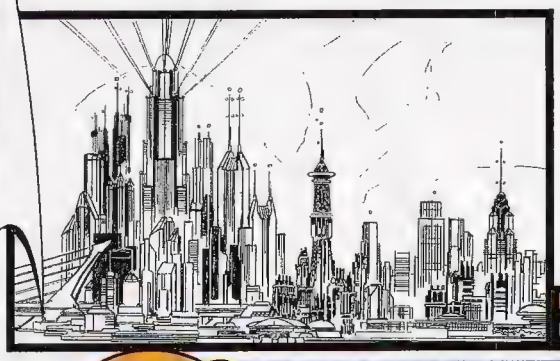
Batman will also go through a few modifications. He'll be going back to a "Year One"–style costume — think Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns*—as well as driving a sleek, new Ferrari-style Batmobile instead of the muscle car readers have become accustomed to.

Batman will also be going tech-heavy, but Brown, who is designing most of the new toys, isn't ready to let the gadgets out of the bag just yet. Vincenzo compared the new gadgets to toys most people would associate with super-spy James Bond.

Although most of the changes debut in January when the books jump ahead an unspecified amount of time from the December issues, Vincenzo assured fans Gotham's reconstruction won't happen overnight.

The team sees the rebuilding of the city as a long range project and fans can expect to see a lot of it in backgrounds. What fans won't see are magical solutions, stories about construction workers or a complete change in Batman's dark and nasty status quo.

"You won't see Batman Red/Batman Blue and you won't see a completely rebuilt Gotham," Vincenzo said with a chuckle. ■ MC



DARK CITY Batman's steppin' out in a rebuilt Gotham with some new gear.

HUH!? TALK ABOUT THEN AND NOW. THE FIRST ADVERTISEMENT EVER TO APPEAR IN *WIZARD* WAS A *GREEN HORNET* AND *MARRIED... WITH CHILDREN* AD FROM NOW COMICS IN *WIZARD* #1

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

COSMIC COURTSHIP

Thanos warms up to Death, thwarts Thor

Maybe Thanos should try the personals.

Beginning in *Thor* #20, Thanos tries wooing his would-be girlfriend Death (yet again) by engineering the theft of something called the Chalice of Tears from Thor's foe Oracle.

Following that, Thanos will become a regular fixture in *Thor* for the next few months, starting in the upcoming *Thor 2000* annual and continuing through at least *Thor* #25 as the God of Thunder struggles to keep the murderous villain from killing billions, according to writer Dan Jurgens.

As Thanos, with Chalice in hand, searches for a being called the Designate, he'll be trailed by Thor, who intends to stop the purple-pussed madman at all costs.

The Chalice and the Designate hold the key to instituting genocide on a truly galactic scale, explains Jurgens. "If you go back to Thanos' early appearances, he had this thirst for death and for cosmic control that was really epic in proportion, and that's what we're getting back to on *Thor*," explains Jurgens, who says the storyline will follow the Thor tradition of sending the Asgardian hero all over the universe in hopes of victory. This newest Thanos arc not only introduces some new characters, but brings back some familiar faces as well, including Tana Nile and the Recorder, as the Odinson tracks Thanos across the universe.

"I've always said that if you go back to *Thor* and *Fantastic Four* when Stan and Jack first did those books...the scope was practically infinite, and that's what this story is going to be about for Thor," added Jurgens.

■ RUSSELL BURLINGAME

IF WE HAD A HAMMER We'd hammer in the morning. We'd hammer in the evening. All over this land.

ENTER THE MIXED-UP 'DRAGON'

Have trouble discerning the good guys? Pity the Dragon.

Creator Erik Larsen will drastically alter continuity in his *Savage Dragon* series with May's #75 to the point where Finhead won't know who to trust. "There's a time-traveler character who went back in time and messed things up," Larsen explained. "In #75, Dragon kills that character before he travels. It changes reality and there's a domino effect that occurs."

FIN-ISHED? "What do you mean *Dragon* sales are down?"

Bottom line? "*Savage Dragon* #76 will be a whole new world," Larsen promised. "Dragon is dropped into this reality unaware how things got messed up. There will be a bit of catching up. Some characters that were good guys will be bad guys, and vice-versa. It really is a huge, huge alteration."

Savage Dragon also made news recently when Larsen told his fan club that the book's sales were slipping, and the title was in danger. "I'm not doing backflips at the sales level," Larsen admitted. The truth? "It's not going anywhere. It would take an act of God to end this book anytime soon. I'm gonna stick at least through #100, and that's two years off." ■ JAKE ROSSEN

BLACK BULL-PEN SWELLS

The Bull-pen continues to grow.

Black Bull Comics—which will make its comics' debut with January's *Gatecrasher* #1 from writer Mark Waid, penciler Amanda Conner and inker Jimmy Palmiotti—has recruited several top-notch artists for variant covers. *Black Widow* penciler J.G. Jones will draw two variant covers for issues #1-#2 of *Gatecrasher*.

"I'm good friends with Jimmy and Amanda, so I was excited when they asked if I wanted to work on the book," said Jones. "I'm always happy to be working, especially on something like this."

Also scheduled to draw variants in the coming months are Joe Jusko and Joseph Michael Linsner (*Dawn*). So look for *Gatecrasher* #1 on sale at a comic shop near you—but not in any china stores naturally. ■ CASEY SEIJAS

PARTY CRASHER Just don't forget the beer.

ON THE MOVE

"I gotta do something different to grow. It was like *The Tenth* was almost getting too easy. By moving to a reality-based book like *F5*, I'm working new talent muscles. Those muscles are kinda sore, but it's what I need to do mentally."

–Tony Daniel, on ditching horror for reality with his new *F5*

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

NAME	FORMER BOOK	NEW BOOK	WRITER/ ARTIST?	THE SCOOP
TONY DANIEL	*The Tenth*	*F5*	writer/artist	Daniel's horror-flavored (with lotsa boobs!) *Tenth* takes five as Tony gears up a new espionage tale. With lotsa boobs.
JIM BALENT	*Catwoman*	*Tarot: Witch of the Black Rose*	artist	Comics' iron man (77 consecutive *Catwomans* and never missed a deadline!) starts lookin' out for himself with a creator-owned horror series.
CHRIS CLAREMONT	Still writin' *Fantastic Four*	X-Men books	writer	The 17-year vet who forged "X" into comics' most powerful letter returns, giving geeks everywhere their impossible dream.
DEVIN GRAYSON	Still writin' *Titans*	*Batman: Gotham Nights*	writer	Grayson got her wings with a few storyarcs in Batman's 1999 "No Man's Land." She's rewarded with a brand-new Bat-book.
LARRY HAMA	*Wild Thing*	*Batman*	writer	*Wild Thing* fell victim to the "MC2" purge, but Hama will bring his tough-guy act to the toughest character of all–Batman.
BRYAN HITCH	*The Authority*	*JLA*	artist	The overpowering Hitch has been stunning a smaller audience on the cult hit *Authority*. Now he'll strut his stuff on the big stage.
SCOTT McDANIEL	*Nightwing*	*Batman*	artist	The Bat Boy is now a Batman. After 3 1/2 years of meritorious service on Batman's sidekick, McDaniel steps up to the big leagues.
GREG RUCKA	"No Man's Land"	*Detective Comics*	writer	As *Detective* becomes the gritty, crime-oriented Bat-book, DC taps a man with two *New York Times* best-seller mystery novels under his trenchcoat.
LEINIL F. YU	*Wolverine*	*X-Men*	artist	One of Marvel's many young overseas sensations fulfills one of his lifelong dreams: He's drawing the X-Men!

DANIEL, CLAREMONT, GRAYSON, HAMA PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. RUCKA PHOTO BY SCOTT INGRAHAM. ALL OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE RESPECTIVE SUBJECTS.

HUH!? SURE, YOU PROBABLY KNOW THAT THE IMAGE CHARACTERS ON THE COVER OF THE VERY FIRST *WIZARD SPECIAL* WERE EACH PENCILED BY THEIR APPROPRIATE CREATOR. BUT DIDJA KNOW THAT TODD MCFARLANE LAID OUT AND INKED THE ENTIRE PIECE UNCREDITED? WELL, HE DID.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

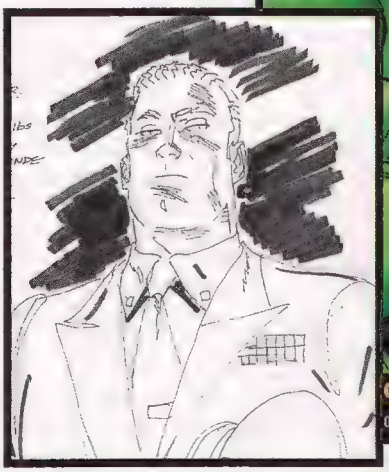
GOV'T GUY GOES FOR GREEN GOLIATH

There aren't many super-baddies who can outmuscle the Hulk. So how do you best the green-skinned Goliath? You outsmart him, silly.

That's the plan of Ryker, a maniacal mastermind who will appear in January's *Incredible Hulk* #12. "We're giving the Hulk an adversary worth having," explained writer Paul Jenkins, who also jumps on board this issue. What can we look forward to? Jenkins explains and Ron Garney provides art.

"He's the ultimate black ops agent. And he's going to torment Bruce Banner for the next full year. He's the darkest of the dark, a man who wanders the corridors of power without being seen. He's the faceless, nameless person behind just about everything, but you can never pin anything on him. He was there when JFK was assassinated. This guy knows what Gulf War syndrome is.

"He's interested in the Hulk because even though he's had gamma technology for as long as anybody, no one can replicate Banner's results—They can't make Hulks. He's been trying for many, many years to create super-soldiers for battle. He's after Banner to try and find out what about him is so special. He has everybody in his pocket. There is nobody he cannot get. He has legions of soldiers to throw at the Hulk, and throw he will." ■ JR



GAMMA BOMBS Someone scared the crap outta the Hulk? Better watch your step.

There's a
NEW LIGHT DAWNING OVER
Gotham City
WATCH FOR IT THIS JANUARY
© 1999 DC COMICS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

YU-GI-OH: THE NEW POKÉMON?

Japanese multimedia phenomenon inspires fan hysteria overseas

Look out, Pikachu: Yu-Gi-Oh mania has eclipsed Pokémania in Japan, and America may be next.

The gaming, video and comic trend currently raging in Japan is not Pokémon but Yu-Gi-Oh, which, like Pokémon, is a multimedia phenomenon—video games, card games, manga comics and anime cartoons exist around the characters. A riot broke out in Japan's Tokyo Dome this August when game-card manufacturer Konami sponsored a tournament and swap meet. Fifty-five thousand fans, some coming from hundreds of miles away, thundered into the 40,000-capacity stadium to get cards, and Konami shut the event down. This only fueled crowd anger, and riot police had to restore order.

The story of Yu-Gi-Oh is the story of Yuugi Mutou, a child whose grandfather gives him an ancient Egyptian "Thousand-Year-Old Puzzle." Once Yuugi completes it, his superpowered alter ego Yuugi Ou is released to fight the bullies that torment little Yuugi Mutou.

Yu-Gi-Oh began as a manga comic about three years ago by Kazuki Takahashi; it's still published by Shonen Jump Comics and so far is up to volume 14. Then about two years ago came the popular collectible-card game. Konami, maker of the video games as well as the cards, has also released two GameBoy games so far, *Yu-Gi-Oh: Duel Monsters* and *Yu-Gi-Oh: Duel Monsters II: Dark Duel Stories*, and a PlayStation Game: *Yu-Gi-Oh: Monster Capsule Breed & Battle*. Toei Animation has released the cartoon series—which began in Japan in spring 1998—on video, and there's a movie available on video as well.

But the bad news is that all things Yu-Gi-Oh are only available in Japan. Without a Japanese connection (like a retailer who orders from overseas), most American kids'll have to go Yu-Gi-Oh-less for now. Despite its huge popularity in Japan, "That sort of support doesn't exist in America," says Ken Ogasawara, producer/marketing representative at Konami. "Currently there are no plans for [bringing Yu-Gi-Oh to the United States]. Konami doesn't have as much pull in the American market as Nintendo [creator of Pokémon] does."

PIKA WHO? Yu-Gi-Oh mania's running wild. But no seizures yet.

Until then, there's always the Internet. Yu-Gi-Oh websites are multiplying (although most of 'em are in Japanese), and cases of Yu-Gi-Oh cards have sold on eBay for as high as $86. ■ **JUSTIN JONES**

DOUBLE TAKES

WHAT THE? WHO THE? WHERE?

Nothing brings people to church like a good funeral.

And so it came to pass that it was a packed house for the funeral of Karen Page in ***Daredevil* #8**. The core cast members in attendance are easy to spot, and the Fantastic Four always stick out like sore thumbs. But here are a few mourners you may *not* have recognized.

1) Becky Blake, secretary at Nelson and Murdock from the mid-1980s run of *Daredevil*

2) Stan Lee, Marvel Comics founder and Daredevil creator

3) Bill Everett, the artist on hand for *Daredevil* (vol. 1) #1

4) Frank Miller, legendary *Daredevil* writer/artist of the mid-1980s

5) Melvin Potter, formerly the villainous Gladiator, now reformed

6) That's the Wakandan delegation. T'Challa, the Black Panther and king of Wakanda, sits dead center.

7) Alitha Martinez, penciler Joe Quesada's art assistant and the penciler of *Iron Man* #1/2

8) Yep, that's Ashley Quinn, star of *Ash*, making an unauthorized inter-company crossover appearance!

9) The penciler-writer-inker crew of *Daredevil* #8, Joe Quesada, Kevin Smith and Jimmy Palmiotti. Kevin, sensitive guy that he is, is cryin' like a baby.

10) Someone's gotta keep everyone in line. Marvel Knights editors Nanci Dakesian and Kelly Lamy keep an eye on everyone. ■ **JM**

HUH!? *WIZARD* PUBLISHER GAREB SHAMUS ACTUALLY APPEARED ON *WIZARD* #44'S COVER. THE GEN[13] BABES SPREAD OUT ON THE FRONT PAGE, WHILE GAREB KEPT THE GEN[13] GUYS "BACKSTAGE" ON THE INSIDE GATEFOLD.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

FABIAN'S SECRET MISSION

New 'Thunderbolts' writer Nicieza promises espionage, surprises

BAD DATES When Mr. Grabby makes with the hands, it spells trouble for Candy's first date.

Can you keep a secret?

New *Thunderbolts* writer Fabian Nicieza sure can, and it's a trend he promises to continue in the months to come on the book that has readers on the edge of their seats with a fine mixture of deception, espionage and surprise.

"In the first few issues, we'll have a couple of goodbyes, a return hello and a double cross," Nicieza said. "We'll also have a funeral."

The *T-Bolts* scribe admits a team member's gonna bite the dust at the end of November's issue #34, but in keeping with the tone and style established by creator Kurt Busiek, the identity of the victim—and the motives behind the death—will remain a mystery.

"The entire book is predicated on surprises, disguises and revelations," Nicieza said. "A lot of it involves juggling several subplots, mysteries and identity secrets all at once."

One such secret involves the new Beetle, who made a brief cameo in issue #33.

"By issue #37, all questions of who is in the armor, how, why, when, where...the questions regarding the Beetle, Abner Jenkins and the Commission on Superhuman Activities—a lot of them will be answered," Nicieza said.

And while he pledges to continue "every single subplot" Busiek had going in the book, Nicieza promises to bring some new twists to the title to introduce new sources of conflict to the team.

"I want Hawkeye to make a mistake that calls into question his leadership," he said. "And in my first few issues, a secret will be revealed to one member that will also go a long way to putting Hawkeye in a little bit of hot water with the team."

Those issues involving the ex-Avenger will create a sense of uncertainty among his teammates, a situation made even more perilous by the possibility that someone's trying to hunt the T-Bolts down.

"We've also got a very important decision for Citizen V," Nicieza said, hinting the hero's choice could have far-reaching ramifications for the team.

"All that'll be in the first few months," Nicieza said. "But I can't go too far without giving things away."

Sounds like's he's got that T-Bolts mystique down pat. ■ a

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NEWS&NOTES

BONGO COMICS

"Batman Beyond" co-producer **Paul Dini** is set to unleash *Emu and Thylacine*, a funny-animal tale set in the Australian outback in spring of 2000. Bongo's Bill Morrison (*The Simpsons*) also tags along for the ride.

CHAOS! COMICS

Super-painter **Dorian Clevenger** (*Lady Pendragon*) provides a limited-edition cover to January's *Lady Death: Dark Millennium* #1.

IMAGE COMICS

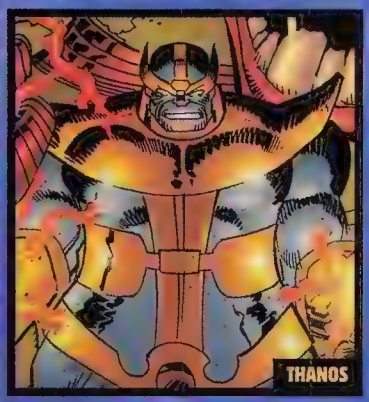
January's *Savage Dragon: Gang War* paperback reprints #22–#26 of creator **Erik Larsen**'s classic *Savage Dragon* series.

• Avalon Studios

Jinn #1 is the latest Avalon offering in January, featuring a thief named Karen Lane and the genie she gets involved with. Avalon's **Whilce Portacio** provides a 1-in-4 variant cover.

• Todd McFarlane Productions

Bad-ass Beau Smith, writer of the *Shi/Wolverine* one-shot, said there will be a **Spawn Magazine** soon, reprinting old *Spawn* issues and containing new stories and pop culture reports.



MARVEL COMICS

John Byrne's last issue as penciler of *Amazing Spider-Man* will be April's #18. No replacement has been tapped yet. **Rob Liefeld**'s last issue penciling *Cable* is November's #75. No replacement yet here, either. Huzzah! Thanos returns and classic reprints result in January as Marvel packages *The Thanos Quest* and *The Infinity Gauntlet*. January's *Fantastic Four* #27 features the wedding(!) of Dr. Doom and the Invisible Woman. Writer **Chris Claremont** and penciler Salvador Larroca are ring bearer and flower girl.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

Akiko on the Planet Smoo, the first-ever **Akiko** offering, gets the "Wizard of Oz" treatment as it gets reprinted in January–this time in full color. The 40-pager goes for $4.95.

WILDSTORM/DC COMICS

In March, **WildStorm** will launch a quarterly series entitled *Genactive*, focusing on the WildStorm universe as a whole. Each issue will have one main story and two back-ups.

NIGHTWING'S ROBIN YEARS REVEALED

Attention, ladies: Dick Grayson's squeezin' back into his short pants. Nightwing, the former Robin, will star in a "Robin: Year One" mini-series co-written by Chuck Dixon (*Nightwing*, *Robin*) and Scott Beatty (*Batman: Day of Judgment*) and illustrated by Javier Pulido (*Hellblazer*). Chronicling his earliest adventures as Batman's sidekick, look for the four-issue, prestige-format DC series in the spring or summer of 2000.

"[It's] the best and worst times of Dick Grayson's life," said Beatty of his as-yet-unnamed project. "It's his greatest triumph and his greatest failure."

Dixon and Beatty's tale begins immediately following the events of *Batman Chronicles: The Gauntlet*, a DC book published last year that depicted a young Grayson passing his final test to become Robin. As "Year One" opens, Grayson is flying high as Robin. But that won't last for long.

"He meets Two-Face," said Dixon. "And we finally get the full story of the double-gallows trap—his first lousy experience as Robin. It was hinted at during the 'Prodigal' storyline in the Batman books, but never really shown."

Before it's all over, Dixon promises a major falling-out between Batman and Robin and an all-new villain "to give Dick Grayson more of a past separate from Batman." The new villain will show up in present-day continuity around *Nightwing* #50. ■ JJ

THUMBINGOFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

MARVEL'S RETRO COMICS Marvel's recent *Avengers* #1 1/2 fit in seamlessly between the *Avengers*' first two issues–everything from the art to the story to the dialogue to the fake Sea Monkeys ad. And John Byrne's new *X-Men: The Hidden Years* series gives us some great mutant stories filling in the gaps from the X-Men's reprint years. We're living in the past...and we love it!

'LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES' The current "Legion of the Damned" storyline has us hooked. Massive devastation. Legionnaires turning on one another. Death. Even non-Legion fans should take note as the book (and the Legion!) is torn apart in preparation for the 12-issue *Legion Lost* mini-series.

DC'S SILVER AGE TOYS DC's new Green Arrow and Green Lantern action figures are beautifully sculpted, surprisingly poseable and fit almost perfectly in scale to Marvel's Famous Covers line...

THUMBS DOWN

DC'S SILVER AGE TOYS ...but they don't come with a small green lantern or trick arrows! What's worse, the back of the boxes depict each character's origin complete with–yeah, you guessed it–trick arrows and a ring-recharging lantern.

CHAREST'S 'WILDCATS' Even with a much ballyhooed relaunch, featuring former *X-Men* writer Scott Lobdell and a cushy, bimonthly schedule, all-star artist Travis Charest *still* couldn't stay on deadline as *Wildcats*' penciler. It's a shame a guy with that much talent may never get the following he deserves because he's too much of an *artiste*.

MARVEL MANIA CLOSING The world's first comic-themed restaurant at Universal Studios Escape in California shut its doors. Universal claims it's just shuffling office space and the restaurant wasn't a failure. Whatever the case, where the heck are we gonna find Hulk burgers and Archangel-Hair pasta?

HUH!? GOT INK? YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT. ROUGHLY 9,419 LBS. OF INK WERE USED IN PRINTING THIS ISSUE OF *WIZARD*.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

HAMMER TIME!

Wade Wilson swipes Thor's hammer, heads for the hills

Is Wade Wilson man enough to lift Thor's mighty hammer? He is if you listen to the twisted minds of the *Deadpool* creative team.

"He gets the hammer and becomes Beta Ray Wade for a while," chuckled *Deadpool* editor Ruben Diaz. "We're doing all sorts of retarded stuff."

Fans of the ever-irreverent Deadpool have all that "retarded stuff" to look forward to in December's issue #37. The merc-with-a-mouth not only meets up with Thor, but ends up stealing the God of Thunder's hammer and tearing across town with the might of Mjolnir on his side.

Running around town with Thor's hammer and Jake Olson chasing him won't be the only thing on Wade Wilson's plate, though. Strapped for cash, he'll help teach at the Taskmaster's school for supervillains and move into a new secret hideout with a couple of infamous roommates. "The cover to an upcoming issue will have Deadpool as an ape," said Diaz, playing off the "JLApe" books DC published. "It's gonna be a lot of fun." ■ NACHIE CASTRO

ARM AND HAMMER Speaking of which, he could use a little baking soda under those pits.

TRAITOR COMES OUT IN 'GEN13' #50

The "traitor in our midst" plot device? It's nothing new. But writer Scott Lobdell swears he has a new twist for *Gen13* #50, on sale in February from WildStorm/DC.

In a story titled "Over My Dead Body," Lobdell said he'll reveal a traitor on the team and a whole lot more, resolving plenty of dangling subplots.

"The Gen13 kids get beat to crap by the villain," Lobdell said, "and with moments ticking away till the end of the world it comes down to—of all people—Grunge going mind-o a mind-o (as opposed to *mano a mano*) with the villain."

As for those subplots, be ready for anything. "We'll have two of the most unexpected guest stars of the year," Lobdell said. "Also, we'll find out the truth behind the mysterious fat man who has been waddling through the book, and learn about Michael Monday, Caitlin Fairchild's quasi-boyfriend." ■ TRENT D. MCNEELEY

GEN13 BUNCH Here's a story, of a mysterious trai-tor...

GET PUBLISHED IN WIZARD!!

DO OUR WORK FOR US!

Got film? Good. Now get creative, 'cause *Wizard*'s looking for a few good photos. Y'know those three wacky shots that run alongside the opening pages to "Wizard News"? (Check out page 27 if you don't.) Well, we need more. What are we looking for? First off: clear, color photographs. (No Polaroids!) Take a few shots from different angles and distances, just to be sure. Second: strange, bizarre, hilarious, what-the-hell-do-you-think-you're-doing scenarios. Dress up your pet. Send your friend in a Batman costume to the post office. Eat some worms. Whatever! The goofier the better. Just keep in mind that the eventual photos run at a very small size, so characters and details should be kept to a minimum.

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LEE, DITKO...REUNITED?

Spider-Man creators patch up decades-old feud

LEE

They say time heals all wounds. This one took 33 years.

Little is known about Steve Ditko. Ever since the original Spider-Man artist turned reclusive in the mid-'60s, his legend has grown. Fan fascination continues to bubble, and the fact that Ditko doesn't grant interviews has only increased the hunger for information about the quirky illustrator.

But Ditko recently re-emerged, launching a letter-writing campaign that accused Marvel Comics founder Stan Lee of taking sole credit for creating Spider-Man. After learning of Ditko's comic-strip-styled letters carrying the title *Tsk! Tsk!*, Lee sent an open letter to Ditko expressing his views, and clarifying the long-running controversy over Spider-Man's creation once and for all.

The letter reads, in part:

"I would like to go on record with the following statement:

"I have always considered Steve Ditko to be Spider-Man's co-creator...

"Steve's illustrated version of Peter Parker/Spider-Man and his coterie of supporting characters was more compelling and dramatic than I dared hope it would be. From his very first panel, Steve created and established the perfect mood for Spider-Man....

"Nor can I forget to credit Steve with the many, many brilliant plots he furnished as the strip continued to increase in popularity with each passing month. So adept was he at storytelling, that Steve eventually did most of the plotting and illustration while I, of course, continued to provide the dialogue and captions.

"I write this to insure that Steve Ditko receives the credit to which he is so justly entitled."

The Lee-Ditko rift dates back to July 1966. Ditko, who indeed *was* credited as plotter in several early *Amazing Spider-Man* issues, had a falling out with Lee after *ASM* #38. Supposedly, the pair couldn't agree on the identity of Spider-Man's then-secret nemesis, the Green Goblin. Ultimately, the Goblin was revealed to be Norman Osborn in #39, but John Romita Sr. was the book's new artist.

Ditko's Dr. Strange work in *Strange Tales* also ended the same month. He drifted back to Marvel for several small projects, but never anything as high-profile as Spider-Man.

So having received the letter, is Ditko satisfied? Only he knows, as the artist refused to comment on the matter.

For his part, Lee was happy merely for a new opportunity to contact Ditko. While both parties want to keep their conversation between themselves, Lee said they talked for several hours and the tone was quite friendly.

Lee also held the door open for a possible reunion. "I would love to do a Spider-Man story with Steve, but Steve isn't interested in working on Spider-Man again," Lee said. "But maybe some day, maybe on another strip. We'll see." ■ JM

SLUGFEST Stan Lee, top, settled his long-standing feud with Steve Ditko over the credit for creating Spider-Man.

LEE PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRALLER, HOCKEY PHOTOS BY JAMIE SABAU

HUH!? OVER THE YEARS, *WIZARD* HAS DONE ROUGHLY 225 FREEBIE INSERTS, RANGING FROM CHROMIUM CARDS TO MILK AND CHEESE BOARD GAMES TO #0 COMICS TO X-MEN DIPLOMAS!

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

THE TODD SQUAD

McFarlane-sponsored youth hockey players are hell on ice

What carries a big stick, wears a Spawn logo and attacks the opposition? A character in the newest *Spawn* spinoff, you say?

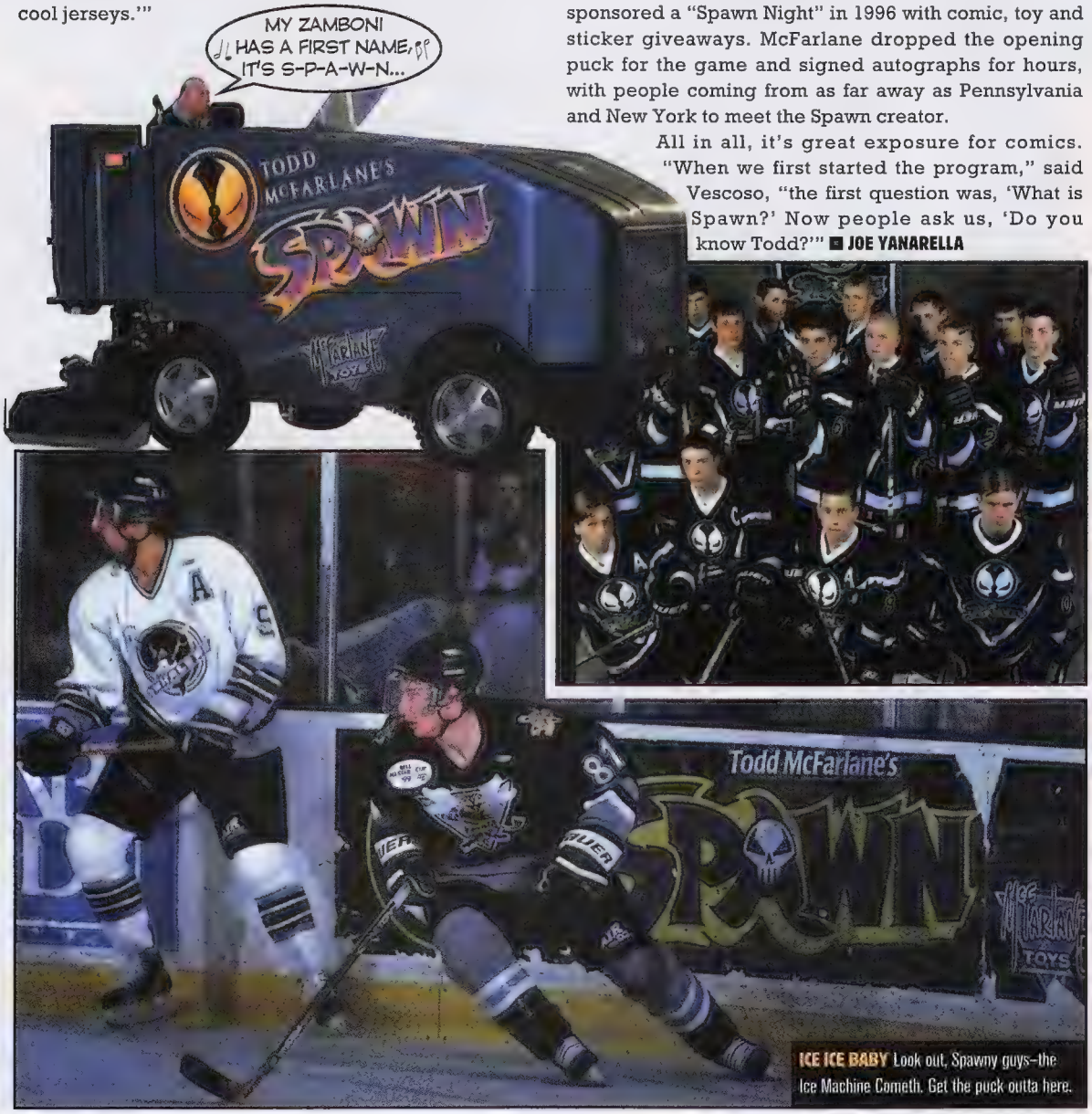
Try 35 youth hockey players in Michigan sponsored by McFarlane Hockey, a little-known division of Todd McFarlane Productions. McFarlane—who grew up in Canada a huge hockey fan and is currently a part-owner of the NHL's Edmonton Oilers—sponsors two Spawn-clad youth teams of 12- to 16-year-olds.

"The reaction we get from people—opposing coaches, referees and players—is remarkable," said Mike Vescoso, director of hockey operations for TMP. "One of the first comments we get is, 'Those are cool jerseys.'"

But that's not the only thing that's cool. You can't help but notice the Spawn influence when you walk into Compuware Arena in Plymouth, Mich., home of the two teams. Arena billboards feature the Spawn logo. Between periods, a Spawn ice machine—with paint that actually appears to change color depending on what angle you view it from!—comes out to smooth the surface. "It's one of a kind," said Vescoso of the ice machine. "If people haven't seen it, they'll stick around between periods to see it. Kids sneak back on the ice early to watch it."

The arena—also home to the Plymouth Whalers, a junior-league team one step short of the NHL—sponsored a "Spawn Night" in 1996 with comic, toy and sticker giveaways. McFarlane dropped the opening puck for the game and signed autographs for hours, with people coming from as far away as Pennsylvania and New York to meet the Spawn creator.

All in all, it's great exposure for comics. "When we first started the program," said Vescoso, "the first question was, 'What is Spawn?' Now people ask us, 'Do you know Todd?'" ■ **JOE YANARELLA**



ICE ICE BABY Look out, Spawny guys–the Ice Machine Cometh. Get the puck outta here.

HUH!?

WHEN FORMER *CATWOMAN* ARTIST JIM BALENT SENDS IN SKETCHES FOR "LAST MAN STANDING" (LIKE *WIZARD* #97'S LARA CROFT VS. RED MONIKA), HE ALWAYS INCLUDES A VARIANT NUDE VERSION. LUCKY US

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

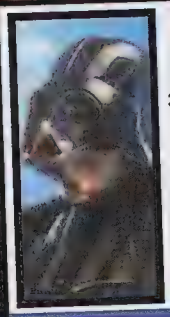
LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

DARTH VADER VS. DARTH MAUL

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE



6'3"	HEIGHT	6"
350lbs	WEIGHT	180lbs
75"	REACH	72"
evil	DISPOSITION	horny
Handy	NICKNAME	Half-Pint

A once promising member of the Galactic peace-keeping Jedi Knights, Anakin Skywalker embraced the Dark Side of the mystical Force to become the powerful and merciless Darth Vader. Able to kill with a gesture or carve his foes to pieces with his lightsaber, Vader's very name makes galaxies tremble.

His origin shrouded in mystery, this much is known about Darth Maul: He makes up half of the sinister prophecy of the Dark Lords of the Sith. More agile than a cat and deadlier than a cobra, Maul can strike twice as quickly thanks to his dual lightsaber.

the battle... Deep in thought within his meditation chamber, Darth Vader senses an odd disturbance in the Force. Unsettled, the Dark Lord emerges from his chamber only to be knocked on his back. Above him, with a devilish grin, stands Darth Maul prepared to strike. He twirls his double-bladed lightsaber and lunges at Vader...who instinctively whips out his blade, blocking the blow. A quick Force shove later, and Vader's up on his feet staring into Maul's intense gaze. Unrelenting, Maul launches a full strike, swinging his blade rapid fire. Sparks fly as Maul outmaneuvers Vader, and a kick sends Vader against a cold steel wall. Taunting Vader with his saber, Maul lets loose a "Ha, no contest" grin. And that's all Vader needs. Commanding the Force, Vader bounces Maul around the room, eventually grabbing him by the neck and running him through. Game over.

this month's battle drawn by JAE LEE

FIRSTLOOK 1

GATECRASHER

Mark Waid blasts off into outer space, signaling Black Bull liftoff

Ah, to live the life of a typical high-schooler. Get up in the morning, go to school, deal with the insults and taunts of your peers, then spend the next several hours diving through dimensional rifts, slamming a bunch of aliens bent on conquering the Earth before heading back home to finish your homework.

That's just life as usual for Alec Wagner, the not-so-typical teen lead in *Gatecrasher*, the debut title of Gareb Shamus' brand-new comic company, Black Bull. A four-issue mini-series debuting in January, *Gatecrasher* comes to you from the fertile minds of writer Mark Waid (*Flash, JLA*), penciler Amanda Conner (*Vampirella*) and inker Jimmy Palmiotti (*Daredevil, Punisher*). "We're the debut book, so everybody's really looking to make a big splash," says Waid. "We've got a lot of creative minds on this project, which makes for a really strong collaborative effort."

"Gatecrasher" refers to Alec's job description: He's secretly part of an elite alien squadron responsible for preventing incursions from other realms, and he literally crashes the gates that open between dimensions. "When these dimensions come into alignment, gates open, and we never know what's on the other side," says Waid. "A Gatecrasher is a guy who can go through and scout it out before whatever's on the other side comes through to hassle us."

A key element to the series' success will be its ability to convey the danger poised just on the other side of these gates, and the consequences to Earth if Alec fails. "The alien squadron's been stranded here for 20 years, building a new generation of Gatecrashers to deal with the gates, because they've always known they would start opening again," says Waid. "Now that they've started, here's where the fun begins. There'll really be a sense of urgency and of imminent danger in this series, providing we're doing our jobs. That should keep us on our toes." (W)

California-based writer Scott Brick likes to crash high-school slumber parties.

BY SCOTT BRICK

BUGGIN' OUT Meet the bad guys of *Gatecrasher*: a bug-like alien race with designs for destruction.

PEARLY GATES

THE DILLY-O

It's *Gatecrasher*, Black Bull's debut release, a four-issue mini-series by Mark Waid, Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti, shipping this January.

WHY YOU CARE

Because it's written by Waid, one of the industry's premier writers, and co-created by Marvel Knights guru Palmiotti. Not to mention that it's the first book to stampede outta Black Bull. (C'mon, you think we'd promote it if we didn't think it was any good?)

DID YOU KNOW?

Fans will never know what's coming through the dimensional gates next. "In the first issue, we have an invisible predator who has designs on our soldiers," says Waid. "After that, it could be anything–an alien elephant, a turtle, a giant tank the size of the Empire State Building. That's the beauty of it: We'll never know."

OPEN SESAME Alec (left) and his hot mentor Hazard try to plug up those pesky gates better than Immodium AD.

FIRSTLOOK2

ARIA/ANGELA

The angel and the amazon team up in this whodunit

They seem to be holding up well for their age.

Lady Kildare is the thousands-year-old faerie woman of *Aria* who gets her kicks living among humanity. Angela is the ancient, savage warrior–angel of *Spawn*. When they meet in *Aria/Angela: Heavenly Creatures*, a two-shot crossover from Avalon Studios in February and April, it should be a thing of beauty.

"There are sweeping vistas!" proclaims writer Brian Holguin. "And this takes place in a very ornamental age. Jay Anacleto is the perfect artist for that. He never cheats on backgrounds. Never."

Holguin oughtta know. He's the co-creator of *Aria*, Anacleto's partner on that book. He's also the monthly writer of *Spawn*. And he's the guy who dreamed up the story. "There were talks between Todd McFarlane and Avalon," Holguin says. "But I didn't want to do a crossover just because it could sell. It took three months for a story to hit me. Luckily, everyone was patient."

The story takes place 100 years in the past, in Victorian England. Kildare, living it up at a costume ball, gets invited to what Holguin calls "An underground freak show. The centerpiece they claim to have is an authentic fallen angel. Kildare is skeptical—of course—but soon realizes this angel is real."

And real angry, apparently. But that's par for the course with the Hellspawn hunter. "Angela is humiliated," Holguin says. "You don't do this to an angelic warrior–huntress. Someone did something real nasty to be able to capture her." Kildare eventually helps free Angela, but that only incites even more trouble. Bottom line? Angela is far from happy. "Angela wants to kill whoever did this, their family, their family's family and maybe their continent," Holguin says. "She's real pissed."

The story is also a bit of a whodunit, as readers try to uncover just how Angela got herself nabbed. "How on earth can you capture an angel?" Holguin asks. "This was the era of Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper. But it was also an era of fascination with faeries and angels, and applying scientific explanations to them. Tremendous powers are at work here, of typical earth-shattering consequence."

And that's what really gets Holguin's motor running. "I don't want to sound dorky," he admits, "but I love writing this. It took three months, but it was worth it."

Jim McLauchlin usually takes three minutes. But damn, he's worth it!

HEAVENLYBODIES

THE DILLY-O

Lady Kildare, the faerie of *Aria*, encounters the fallen angel Angela. After freeing Angela from brutal captivity, Kildare must prevent her from wholesale slaughter of her captors.

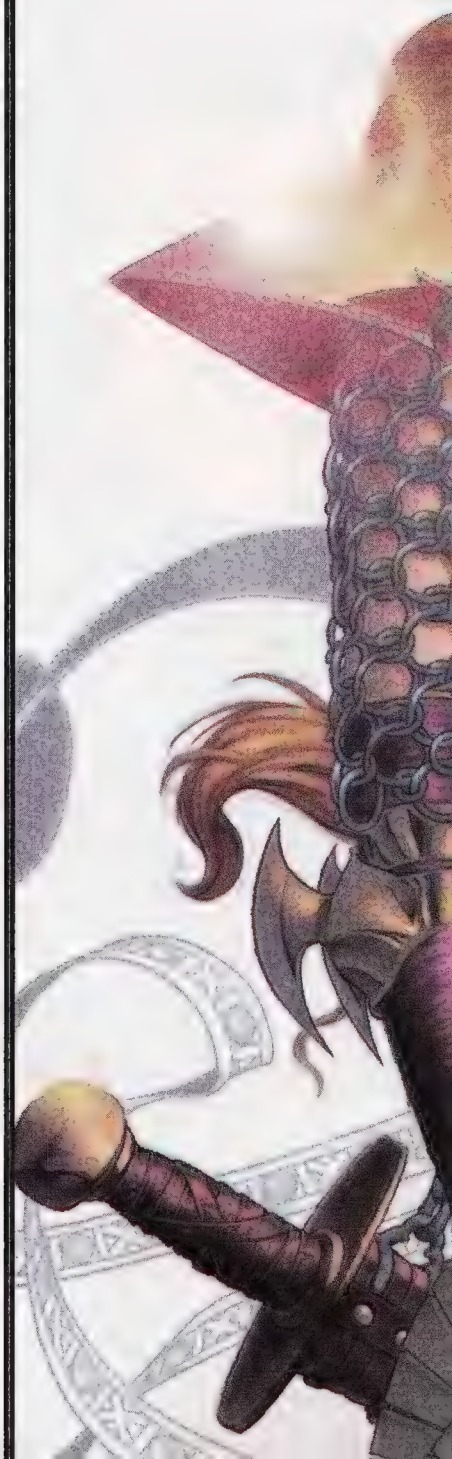
WHY YOU CARE

Any appearance of seldom-seen Spawn-hunter Angela is an event. Add in the amazing art of Jay Anacleto, and a writer in Brian Holguin who's intimate with both characters, and you've got a *major* event.

DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone seems to love Jay Anacleto's art, but he often gets busy at his day job. So busy, in fact, getting pages from Anacleto can be like pulling teeth–he's a dentist by trade.

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN



BABE SANDWICH Get yourself between these two heavenly hotties and hold the mayo!

WHAT'S MY LINE?

THAT'S WHAT WE WANNA KNOW. 'WIZARD' STACKS UP AMERICA'S BEST COMICS, CLIFFHANGER AND MARVEL KNIGHTS TO PICK THE BEST IMPRINT IN COMICS TODAY

BY THE WIZARD STAFF

Call us crazy. Everyone knows about hot comics like *Battle Chasers*, *Daredevil*, *Tom Strong*. They're rackin' up critical acclaim and high sales faster than you can say "Pikachu." Those and a lot more funnybooks published by imprints Cliffhanger, Marvel Knights and America's Best Comics are plenty good, and most fanboys would be content to just read 'em. But not us.

We find all three imprints so fantastic, *Wizard* decided to ask the hard question: Which imprint publishes the best comics?

Cliffhanger formed when red-hot artists Joe Madureira, J. Scott Campbell and Humberto Ramos left their work-for-hire books and went creator-owned. Artists Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti leased classic but middling Marvel heroes and re-energized 'em by injecting new, hot creative talent at Marvel Knights. And ABC happened when legendary writer Alan Moore suddenly went prolific, creating and writing five monthly books.

The best imprint? We fortified ourselves in a Fortress of Solitude with only White Castles and Twinkies and came up with the answer. And we can *prove* it. We picked five important categories: writers, artists, characters, storylines/plot and "added value," which encompasses all the little ways a comic can go the extra mile to win your heart. We judged the imprints in each category, awarding five points to the winner, three points for place and one for show. Then it was as simple as tallying up the numbers. Good thing at least *one* staffer finished Algebra.

What'd we come up with? Keep reading, and add 'em up for yourself.

WRITERS

ABC

Alan Moore. 'Nuff said. The legendary *Watchmen* and *Swamp Thing* scribe laid low for a decade with average work-for-hire stories, then exploded onto the scene with *Tom Strong*, *Promethea*, *Top 10*, *Tomorrow Stories* and the six-issue mini-series *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. He created every title and writes 'em all every month.

Cliffhanger

What are friends for? Writing, it seems. Cliffhanger's writers—newcomers like Munier Sharrieff, Andy Hartnell, Francisco Haghenbeck and Oscar Pinto—are friends of the artists. The artists, being the key creative forces behind the books, co-plot them, and they're as new to the writing game as their scripters. In January, the Cliff' gains star writer Joe Kelly (*X-Men*, *Action Comics*) on new title *Steampunk*.

Marvel Knights

Call them the fixer-uppers. To jolt some life into second-tier characters, Marvel Knights lured acclaimed writers from outside the comics field like "Clerks" director/screenwriter Kevin Smith and "Back to the Future" writer Bob Gale. They also snagged big-name DC talents Grant Morrison, Devin Grayson, Garth Ennis and offbeat Vertigo writer Paul Jenkins.

Final Tally

The more Moore, the better.

Moore rocked comics in the '80s with *Watchmen* and now stirs the same drink with the entire ABC line's intelligent, fascinating stories month after month. He's easily shot back to the top of *Wizard*'s "Top 10 Writers" list in just a few months with his kick-ass scripting.

Marvel Knights features a strong mix of writers who've done a great job resuscitating "dead" characters like Black Widow and Black Panther, but none of 'em are quite up to Moore's level. As for Cliffhanger, it's no secret that most folks buy their books for the art. The stories can be fun, but their focus on visuals means the writers take a backseat.

TOM STRONG

WRITERS TALLY:

ABC: 5
MARVEL KNIGHTS: 3
CLIFFHANGER: 1

ARTISTS

ABC

Solid as a rock. ABC boasts illustrators like Kevin O'Neill, Gene Ha, Rick Veitch, J.H. Williams III and Chris Sprouse—all artists who have been around for years, even if they haven't accumulated star name power. And Moore has recruited heavyweights Dave Gibbons and Art Adams for brief guest stints.

Cliffhanger

Get out yer oven mitts: Joe Madureira. J. Scott Campbell. Humberto Ramos. Chris Bachalo (joinin' the stable in January with new title *Steampunk*). Every one of these guys' star power is white hot. Wanna find a hot-artist haven? You'll find it in Cliffhanger.

Marvel Knights

A big tent. MK editors Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti recruited a mix of big-name artists like Jae Lee, Bernie Wrightson and Steve Dillon, plus newcomers like Pat Lee and J.G. Jones. Jones made a big splash on *Black Widow*, and don't forget Quesada and Palmiotti themselves illustrate *Daredevil*.

Final Tally

No suspense here. Cliffhanger owns this category, lock, stock and barrel.

Madureira's possibly the hottest artist in the biz right now—every time a new *Battle Chasers* comes out, no matter what the wait, fans snap it up. And a good portion of *Danger Girl*'s sales figures can be attributed to Abbey Chase's deliciously curvy posterior, rendered by Campbell. Along with Ramos and Bachalo, these guys lead the field of comic art.

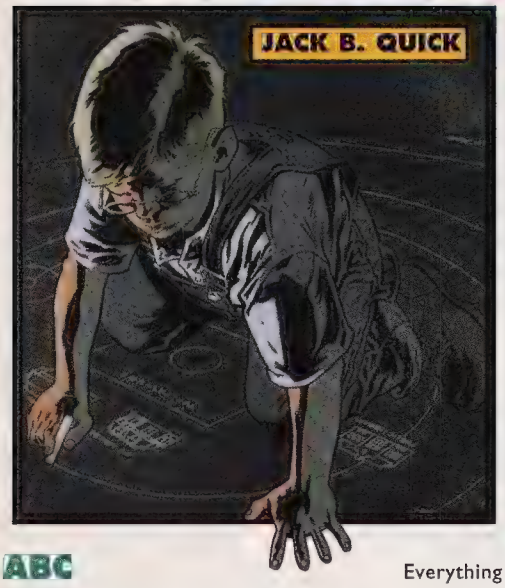
While Marvel Knights has a lot of standout names and solid talent, none of 'em rank up with or are as established as the Cliffhanger artists. As for ABC, well, we're willing to bet that nine out of 10 fanboys don't have a clue who draws *Tom Strong*.

BATTLE CHASERS

ARTISTS TALLY:

CLIFFHANGER: 5
MARVEL KNIGHTS: 3
ABC: 1

CHARACTERS



ABC

All-new, all-different. That goes for every one of Moore's crop o' characters. *Über*-man Tom Strong, raised in an super-gravity environment, has a talking monkey for a sidekick. Precocious youth Jack B. Quick from *Tomorrow Stories* creates solar systems in his backyard. And *Top 10* features over a dozen super-cops and robbers, like the "Zen" taxi driver who drives blindfolded.

Cliffhanger

Fan-friendly characters galore. And though the characters are new, they may seem familiar: The *Danger Girl* crew—hot "Charlie's Angels" babes—accomplish James Bondian action stunts. In *Battle Chasers*, little girl Gully has been bequeathed a powerful gift from her father, and Garrison the swordsman swore never to lift his blade again after the death of his beloved. *Crimson* features Alex Elder, a hip, teenage vampire.

Marvel Knights

Everything old is new again! Daredevil, Punisher, Black Widow, Dr. Strange, Black Panther and the Inhumans were once just supporting characters or had titles of limited success. Marvel Knights gives 'em a chance to shine: Black Widow, an aging cold warrior, regrets her career choice. Troubled monarch Black Panther faces uprising in his African homeland.

Final Tally

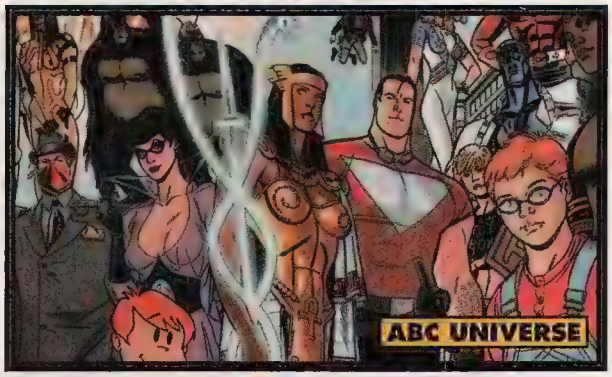
Who knew learning your ABCs was so much fun? Ask any America's Best Comics fan: Read the books for just a few issues and you'll quickly start to care about the characters, each one invested with personality and fun, memorable quirks. Even throwaway characters like *Top 10*'s "Immune Girl," a hooker resistant to AIDS who appeared in only one issue, fascinate us.

Cliffhanger makes its characters fun—but familiar—stereotypes. Though the creators make no attempt to hide their superficiality and actually have fun with it, we've seen these spy-types and sword-and-sorcery-types before. And Marvel Knights? Full of second-stringers, still trying to join the elite ranks of the X-Men and Spider-Man. But maybe they'll get there before the Knights finish.

CHARACTERS TALLY:

ABC: 5
CLIFFHANGER: 3
MARVEL KNIGHTS: 1

STORYLINES/PLOT



ABC

Diverse and full of twists. From pulp to mythology to Victorian literature, ABC taps plenty genres. In *Promethea*, two best girlfriends journeyed to a dreamland and met Little Red Riding Hood. *Top 10* grafts superpowers onto gritty, ensemble-cast cop shows like "NYPD Blue." Sci-fi hero Tom Strong helped create a computer so powerful, it literally became a *god*. That's versatility for ya.

STORY/PLOT TALLY:

ABC: 5
MARVEL KNIGHTS: 3
CLIFFHANGER: 1

Cliffhanger

Fun, fun, fun! *Danger Girl*, a light-hearted espionage romp, laughs at its own gratuitous T&A in between car chases and bulldozers knocking houses over cliffs. *Battle Chasers* packs action to the max with sword fights and big, menacing demons. *Crimson* features chain-mail armored knights and vampires battling in the present-day.

Marvel Knights

Talk about Mission: Impossible. Give MK credit: To many fans' amazement, readers actually care about characters like the Inhumans. Titles like *Black Panther* and *Black Widow* had startling changes in continuity. And the books have plenty of twists: Daredevil's longtime girlfriend Karen Page got killed off, and the Punisher was revealed to be—working for an angel?

Final Tally

Pick up an ABC book and buckle up; you're in for a roller coaster ride.

We can't think of a single ABC story yet that wasn't a fun read; Moore possesses an amazing storytelling ability and can switch from Mr. Hyde needling the Invisible Man in *League* to a superhero drug bust in *Top 10* in the same month.

Marvel Knights comes in second for revitalizing heroes like Daredevil and the Inhumans. But they've had a few misses—like the *Punisher* mini-series that made him, uh, supernaturally powered. Hopefully, Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's new *Punisher* series next year'll rectify that. Cliffhanger's storylines taste like marshmallows—fun to eat, but low on substance.

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ADDED VALUE

ABC

Tidbits galore. Victorian ads in the back of *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* make you laugh (Hayman's Balsam of Horebound relieves cough in 10 minutes!"), and there's a text story as well. The *League* letters pages are written in a mock Victorian style, and over in *Tom Strong* Solomon the talking monkey answers the letters. And hard-to-find *League* issues were collected in reprint editions for fans.

Cliffhanger

Alternate cover, anyone? Cliffhanger prints plenty of 'em, increasing collectibility. They reprint sell-out issues in collected editions. Inside, you'll find tons of pin-ups and funny ads—*Danger Girl* ads hysterically play up the title's sex-vamp angle. BUT, Cliffhanger books have been really, really late. Only one issue of *Battle Chasers* has shipped this year, and less than four of *Danger Girl*. You can't enjoy what you don't have, and it pisses fans off. (We know, we get the mail.)

Marvel Knights

Simplicity. Marvel Knights reprinted the hard-to-find first three issues of Smith's *Daredevil*. Aside from that, though, their strategy is pretty straightforward: They make the books, you buy 'em. And fans do.

Final Tally

ABC gives bang for your buck.

All the extras consistently make any ABC book a fun, accessible read. Marvel Knights makes solid books, but they don't go the extra mile like ABC does. But the lateness factor figures key here, and that's where Cliffhanger really comes up short. True, ABC's *League* has been late. So has MK's *Daredevil*. But both *Battle Chasers* and *Danger Girl* ship so late it's ridiculous. Cliffhanger's in danger of losing its audience, even if the books ever do arrive, because fans aren't going to wait forever. Madureira and Campbell oughtta stop playing video games and drawing alternate covers for other books (uh, except *Wizard*, that is) and get to work.

ADDED VALUE TALLY:

ABC: 5
MARVEL KNIGHTS: 3
CLIFFHANGER: 1

LINE DANCING

WRITERS, ARTISTS, YADDA YADDA YADDA. THESE ARE THE CATEGORIES THAT REALLY MATTER!

SCARIEST COMPANY MASCOT
ABC: Alan Moore's beard
Cliffhanger: Joe Madureira's Sega thumb
Marvel Knights: Joe Quesada's gut
WINNER: ABC

SELLING OUT
ABC: Alan Moore sold soul to the devil
Cliffhanger: Company head Jim Lee sold soul to DC
Marvel Knights: Quesada and Palmiotti sold souls for half a Ding-Dong and three Yodels
WINNER: MARVEL KNIGHTS

LEAST LIKELY TO BE FOUND ON PREMISES
ABC: "Pokémon" videos
Cliffhanger: A calendar
Marvel Knights: Uneaten food
WINNER: CLIFFHANGER

COOLEST ABBREVIATION
ABC: ABC (duh)
Cliffhanger: Cliffy
Marvel Knights: MK (often mistaken for *Mortal Kombat*)
WINNER: CLIFFHANGER

PROBLEMS CROSSING THE BORDER?
ABC: Alan Moore banned by State Department
Cliffhanger: Too busy napping, passport expired
Marvel Knights: Only border crossed is Taco Bell
WINNER: ABC

FAVORITE ACCENT
ABC: British
Cliffhanger: Japanese
Marvel Knights: Brooklynese
WINNER: MARVEL KNIGHTS

COOLEST TRIVIA FACT
ABC: Moore's a magician
Cliffhanger: Madureira's not dead
Marvel Knights: Quesada recently hit himself in the face with a house
WINNER: MARVEL KNIGHTS

THE FINAL TALLY: Marvel Knights slay the competition 3-2-2. But hey, they're all good reads. And they read even better with Taco Bell.
—*Richard Ho and the Wizard Staff*

CONCLUSION

The best comics imprint of 1999? ABC runs away with it as easy as one, two, three.

America's Best Comics (and they're written by a Brit!) live up to their name by telling the coolest stories in comics today. Easy to do when super-scribe Alan Moore masterminds every book and character.

Don't get us wrong: Marvel Knights and Cliffhanger put out some great comics; otherwise we wouldn't be writing this feature. But ABC can't be beat for its intelligent, captivating writing, resonating characters and the fascinating storylines they find themselves in. Fans of all genres can find a book for themselves, whether it be action, humor, historical adventure, science fiction or fantasy. And no matter what, ABC guarantees readers one thing: originality. How can ya not love a comic book where walking, talking sharks practice law? Where creative writing transforms you into a superhero (every fanboy's dream)? Where an intelligent dog in a robotic body serves as a police sergeant?

Alan Moore made his name legend with *Watchmen* over a decade ago, and now proves his immense talent to a new generation.

America's Best Comics? Yep, they just might be.

TOTAL TALLY:

ABC: 21
MARVEL KNIGHTS: 13
CLIFFHANGER: 11

The Wizard Staff may love America's Best Comics, but we're not down with that nationalism thing. Good comics are for Russkies, too!

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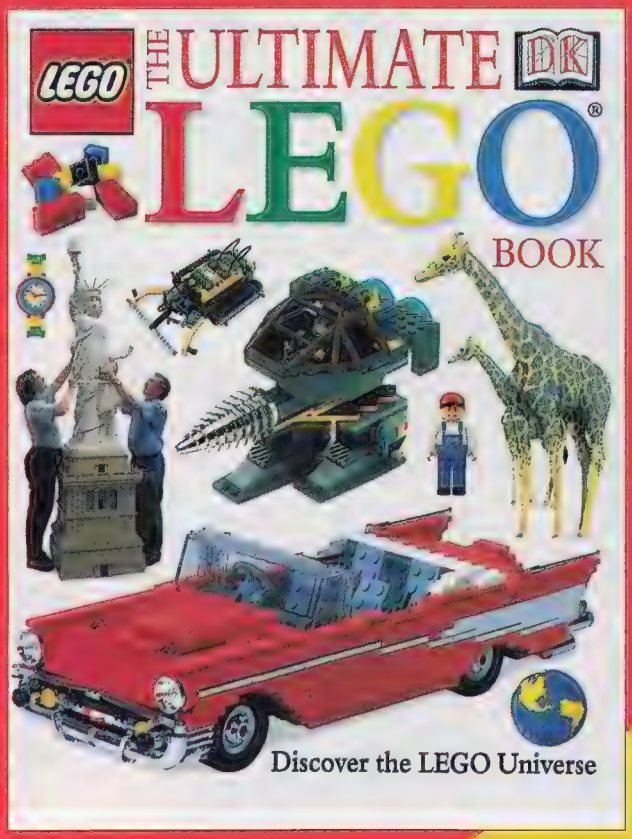

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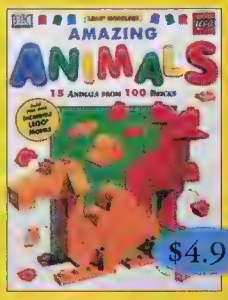

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Fight

PHOTO BY PAUL SCIRALDI

t Club

Writer vs. artist? Lee vs. Kirby? 'Wizard' settles comics' greatest debates

By the Wizard Staff

Wanna fight?

If not, you've stopped at the wrong article. But if you're ready and willing for healthy, uh, discussion, you've come to the right place.

Y'see, if you get any two fanboys together to shoot the breeze about comics, the conversation can progress to debate. "Hal Jordan as the Spectre? That sucks!" "Whaddaya mean, it's genius!" Of course, this debate could always turn to the tried–and–true topics like whether the writer or artist is more important. Or whether Jack Kirby deserves more credit than Stan Lee. Or if *Dark Knight Returns* kicks *Watchmen*'s ass as the greatest story of all time.

Which is where we come in. We figured we'd give you—and only you, so don't tell nobody—some ammo if any of these discussions should come along, just so's your ready for 'em. Avoid that frivolous fistfight with the right answers you'll find right here, where we list the most controversial debates, dissect them and, yes, settle 'em once and for all.

You heard right: *once and for all.* And if you disagree…?

Let's get it on.

WHO'S MORE IMPORTANT: Writer vs. Artist

It takes two to make a comic. The writer, who conceptualizes a story with a plot and script. And the artist, who executes it visually on paper. (That is, unless you're Frank Miller, who possesses the skill to do both jobs.) Is one role more important than the other?

THE BEST COMIC STORY EVER:

Watchmen vs. Dark Knight

The elite. Plain and simple. No one argues that these two tales mean comic book royalty. But which one's truly the best comic story ever: *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, Frank Miller's urban tale which pulls a fiftysomething Batman out of retirement to fix Gotham City's crime woes? Or *Watchmen*, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' story of a world on the brink of nuclear war that only ex-heroes can prevent?

We'd go *Watchmen* every time. This complex 12-issue series entertains us on so many different levels, it's tough to beat. Not only does it deliver an engaging conspiracy story where ex-heroes fall to a "mask killer," but it's a book so densely detailed that every time you read it, you pick up something new. The first panel of every issue ties into the final panel of every issue; in fact, the first panel of the *first* issue ties into the very last panel of the *final* issue. It could be something subtle in the background like the newspaper headlines signaling imminent war or a prose supplement at the back of each issue. There's visual symbolism, tying the government agent Comedian's smiley-face badge to an actual smiley-face rock formation on Mars (It really exists–just ask NASA!).

Heck, you want complex? Issue #5, starring the vigilante Rorschach, *is* a rorschach (i.e., one those symmetrical psychology blots). Check it out: Go to pages 14 and 15, which are laid out in a mirror image. Then scope out the symmetry of pages 13 and 16, 12 and 17, and so on. Neat, eh?

Oh, and one other thing: You don't need to know comics to enjoy *Watchmen*. Some off-the-wall stuff in *Dark Knight* (like Selina Kyle dressed up as Wonder Woman) may scare off any non-fanboy.

Sure, Dark Knight kicks major ass as the single greatest Batman story ever told, but it falls short of Moore and Gibbons' masterpiece of pure genius.

WINNER: ***Watchmen***

A-BOOT FACE! Batman's *Dark Knight* may kick-ass on the action end, but the complexity of *Watchmen* (and Rorschach, at left) come out on top.

A tough question, to be sure. Toughest on the list. But when you boil it down to the bare bones, the answer's obvious: more so than a writer, the artist can make or break any comic book.

A fantastic artist can make a great story even better. It can even make a horrible story worth looking at. On the flip side, a lousy artist can kill a great story *and* a pathetic story. Can't say the same for the writer.

Comic books are a visual medium, plain and simple. A writer's role is vital, but an artist's is *essential*.

WINNER: **Artist**

BETTER GREEN LANTERN:
Kyle Rayner vs. Hal Jordan

DC asked for it. After all, when the publisher took Hal Jordan's Green Lantern power ring—which he held for 35 years—and handed it over to rookie Kyle Rayner, DC practically begged for controversy. And it got it. Big time.

Sure, having a gray-templed Hal go nuts and kill off a lotta people might've had something to do with it. But DC did one thing right: it got a better Green Lantern in Kyle.

Hal got tagged as GL because he was fearless. Kyle, on the other hand, got chosen randomly, unsure of the raw power his ring possessed. And that's why Kyle comes across as a lot more human. And more interesting.

Hal had potential—DC gave him a drinking problem 10 years ago—but it just didn't elevate him to the next level of "real."

It's too bad we're only finding out through retro stories like *JLA: Year One* and *JLA: The Brave and the Bold* that Hal really could be made cool, but he never had creative support. But hey, in the here and now, we'll just sit back and enjoy following Kyle.

WINNER: **Kyle Rayner**

WHO'S THE BETTER CREATOR:
Claremont vs. Byrne

Together, they made magic. But when the co-plotting writer/penciler team of Chris Claremont and John Byrne split up due to "creative differences," many wondered if the duo responsible for such *Uncanny X-Men* classics as "Dark Phoenix Saga " and "Days of Future Past" could make it without each other.

Since then, though, Byrne proved he didn't need Claremont to succeed. The solo Byrne took his work to the next level writing and drawing *Fantastic Four* and revamping Superman. Claremont, on the other hand, did his best work collaborating with Byrne (Anyone remember a *true* Claremont classic published since 1980?), churning out lukewarm *X-Men* issues, the lackluster *Sovereign 7* and getting mixed reviews on *Fantastic Four*. The solo Byrne, however, took his work to the next level writing and drawing some of the best *Fantastic Four* stories of all time, and revamping Superman as a much more likeable hero.

While these days, the pair ain't igniting any comic renaissance, Byrne's legacy will outlast his former partner's.

WINNER: **John Byrne**

WHO'D WIN:
JLA vs. Avengers

Okay, let's forget that they wouldn't really fight. For our purposes, we wanna see the core rosters of Marvel and DC's premier superteams fight to the death in our own "Elseworlds"-style arena. And as the gauntlet drops…

"Avengers…disassemble."

For all the sheer might and skilled teamwork of Earth's Mightiest

HUH!? IN THE *WIZARD* EDITORIAL BULLPEN THERE'S A WALL OF *WEEKLY WORLD NEWS* COVERS SPORTING SUCH CLASSIC HEADLINES AS "WORLD'S BIGGEST BABY!" "BAT BOY CAPTURED" AND "SCIENTISTS BREED 4 FOOT TALL HEN!"

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS…

Heroes, the JLA simply packs more punch. Superman'll outhit you. And if he doesn't, Wonder Woman will. Batman will outstrategize you. Martian Manhunter will read your mind. And that's before Flash, Green Lantern and Aquaman even enter the equation.
WINNER: JLA

ALEX ROSS' BEST BOOK:
Marvels vs. *Kingdom Come*

Both define Alex Ross' golden career.

But *Marvels*' everyman approach blows the future-world of *Kingdom Come* to, well, kingdom come. *Marvels*, written by Kurt Busiek, took early Marvel stories and revolved them around series star photographer Phil Sheldon. Told through his eyes, Phil convincingly relays the awe and wonder of how costumed superheroes would be perceived in the real world.

KC's allegorical "superheroes-go-violent" approach had some of Ross' finest art, but ultimately turned out to be a bunch of really coolmoments, falling flat in-between.

Not too many retro stories can stand up against classic Stan Lee/Jack Kirby stuff, but *Marvels* simply marvels.
WINNER: Marvels

WHICH CITY'S COOLER:
Metropolis vs. Gotham

Metropolis sets the stage in Superman's stories. Gotham lives and breathes as a *character* in Batman's.

The Dark Knight's hometown, whether its ravaged by an earthquake or full of towering shafts of gothic concrete and steel, comes alive when night falls. Its urban landscape becomes as feared as any Joker or Two-Face, by its citizens too scared to walk its streets.

Metropolis, on the other hand, stands like an art-deco future city... a nice place to live. Not so for Gotham. We'd rather read about comics' original town without pity.
WINNER: Gotham City

THE MOST CONVINCING MOVIE HERO:
Keaton vs. Reeve

We've all seen 'em a million times. On the big screen, that is. Michael Keaton as Batman and Christopher Reeve as Superman.

And when we ask ourselves who acted more convincingly, there's no contest. Reeve looked like he literally flew out of the comics, masterfully transforming into Superman. No questions asked. Whether he's confronting Lex Luthor in costume or bumbling about as Clark Kent, Reeve personified every truth, justice and American way that his role upheld.

In his defense, Keaton got the shaft.Crammed with villains and supporting players, the Bat-flicks squeezed more and more screen time from Keaton's Batman/Bruce Wayne. And, as well as he acted in the Bat-flicks, Keaton didn't really look like the comic book Bruce Wayne. Reeve's Man of Steel simply steals the show.
WINNER: Reeve

CLOBBERIN' TIME The everyman angle makes *Maravels* beat out *Kingdom Come*, as Alex Ross' best work.

THE REAL #1 PUBLISHER:
Marvel vs. DC Comics

They ain't called the Big Two for nothing. Combined, they own 65% of the industry's sales.

On the surface, Marvel lords it over DC in the character department, with more human heroes like Spider-Man than DC's gilded icons like Superman. But when the full picture is painted, DC does so much other stuff right.

While Marvel's dominated the industry the last 40 years with its characters, DC has expanded the *perception* of the comic book character. Nowadays, comics face more competition than ever from the likes of video games, the Internet and cable TV, the comic industry must be as proactive as possible. It needs to offer a wide array of themes and storylines that push the boundaries of what comics are more than ever before. DC, through major media events ("The Death of Superman," Gotham City's earthquake, etc.), diversity (Cartoon Network books, the adult-oriented Vertigo, etc.) and mainstream media success (top-rated 'toons like "Batman Beyond," big-budget films like "Batman," Six Flags theme parks, Warner Bros. Stores, etc.) is really doing the job.

But Marvel's on the move, too. With X-Men and Spider-Man movies in the works and the Universal Marvel Island of Adventure theme park a smash hit...this debate's awful close. But, for now, DC still takes it home.
WINNER: DC Comics

GOIN' DOWN Marvel takes a mud bath in this tug o' war.

WHO'S THE BETTER ROBIN:
Dick Grayson vs. Tim Drake

Does being first mean being best? Not if you're Robin.

Dick Grayson may've been the original sidekick in green short pants, but current Robin, Tim Drake, really makes the most outta being Batman's partner. So much so that this Robin doesn't need Batman to make his adventures interesting.

Peer pressure, girl trouble and lack of sleep describe Tim's life…'cause going out at night to fight crime ain't all it's cracked up to be. Once, Tim's principal thought he was a victim of child abuse when Tim came to school all banged up from fighting a Gotham gang the night before.

Dick really blossomed when he ditched his Robin identity for his Nightwing get-up, where his adventures didn't need to fall under the shadow of the Bat.

But in Tim's case, that's exactly where we like him.

WINNER: Tim Drake

WHO'S THE BETTER 'BABE' ARTIST:
Campbell vs. Turner

Call them the breast of friends. Or just call 'em J. Scott Campbell and Michael Turner.

Both have made a healthy living drawing busty babes wearing strands of dental floss or wet T-shirts. Campbell on *Gen*[13] and *Danger Girl*, Turner on *Witchblade* and *Fathom*. Who do we like the breast…er, best?

Campbell titillates us more, simply because his women have more distinctions. Turner's sirens, on the other hand, appear very similar in style (and all of them beautiful, by the way).

Turner may draw four times as many comics than Campbell in a year, but when that issue of *Danger Girl* comes out, we'll always scope it out. And maybe take it to the bathroom.

WINNER: Campbell

GWEN STACY'S DEATH:
Neck Snap vs. Shock From Fall

Howdunnit?

Did Gwen Stacy die from shock when the Green Goblin knocked her off the Brooklyn Bridge in *Amazing Spider-Man* #121 (Vol. 1)? Or did her neck snap when Spider-Man snagged her mid-fall with a web-line?

If you look closely at the panel where Spidey stopped her descent, you'll see a li'l sound effect. It says, "Snap!"

To our mind, that says it all.

WINNER: Neck Snap

WHO'S THE COOLER GAL PAL:
Lois vs. Mary Jane

Gee…a savvy go-getter or a whiny priss?

We'll go with choice #1, since ace reporter Lois Lane never gives up and is at least consistent. Mary Jane Parker, a supermodel, has gone through more personality makeovers than Madonna. At first, she was a flighty party girl. Then she's a world-class supermodel who goes through men like they were going outta style. Then she admits it's all an act of insecurity and marries Peter Parker, a.k.a. Spider-Man. Now she doesn't know if she really wants to be married to Spider-Man.

Lois may be a stubborn pain in the ass, but she's at least *interesting*.

WINNER: Lois

WHICH NEWSPAPER RULES:
Daily Planet vs. Daily Bugle

You want the news, you go to the source.

But which daily metropolitan paper would you find more

HEROIC ETHICS:
To Kill vs. Not To Kill

Heroes kill.

Sometimes they have to. To preserve and protect those that expect them to make the tough decisions. But does that make it right?

Yes. A true hero doesn't make such a weighty decision arbitrarily. Just when it's the only option. That's what separates the Supermans and Spider-Mans from the Punishers and Wolverines, who take the easy way out with murder.

Disagree? Then you might as well call Superman a supervillain. While in an alternate reality, the Man of Steel faced three Kryptonians more powerful than he in an alternate-reality on an Earth they extinguished all life from. The trio threatened to do the same to Superman's Earth. Out of options, Superman did what he felt he had to: as that world's last living being, he acted as judge, jury and executioner.

He killed them with their own Kryptonite.

Superman didn't like making that decision, but he did it to save the countless lives that could've been lost if he didn't. In fact, his actions haunted him so much, he developed mental problems over guilt.

But he's still a hero. He didn't take the easy way out. He did what he felt had to be done because it simply *had to be done*.

Now we're not saying Batman should snap the Joker's neck the next time they meet, but sometimes heroic protectors must do terrible things to preserve innocent lives. It won't make them feel like heroes. But that's what they are.

WINNER: To Kill

HUH!? A BRAZILIAN-LICENSED EDITION OF *WIZARD* RAN FOR 15 ISSUES AND OCCASIONALLY CONTAINED PSEUDO-PORN. WOO HOO!

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS…

All Characters ™ and © 2000 their respective creators. A.R.R.

GOOD VS. EVIL

Comics'...uh...other great debates

WHO DAMAGED COMICS MORE:
Fredric Wertham vs. Joel Schumacher
One man brought comics to its knees. The other wrote a book.
WINNER: Schumacher

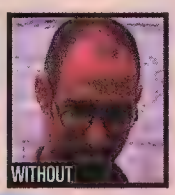
THE CRAZIER FANATIC:
Trekkie vs. Warsie
Unfortunately, there's no real winner in this ugly, dirty war.
WINNER: George Lucas and Paramount

FAVORITE KUBERT:
Adam vs. Andy
Father knows best. And here's what he told us...
WINNER: Q*Bert

THE TASTIER COLA:
Coke vs. Pepsi
Always Coca-Cola.
WINNER: Coke

SEXIER BODY PART:
T vs. A
Ever hear a breast fart?
WINNER: T

MORE COMFY:
Boxers vs. Briefs
Let's start a campaign: BURN THEM TIGHTY WHITEYS!
WINNER: Boxers



LEAST FRIGHTENING:
Joe Kelly With Hair vs. Without
WINNER: With Hair

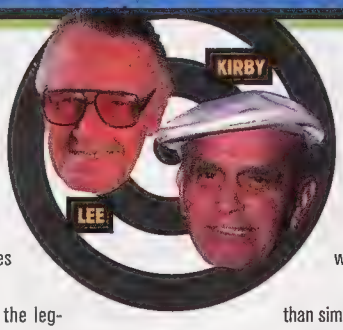
BETTER BURGER:
Big Mac vs. Whopper
Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun? DE-licious!
WINNER: Big Mac

AFFLICTION OF LEAST RESISTANCE:
Constipation vs. Diarrhea
Plugged up or the Hershey squirts? We like chocolate but not *that* kind!
WINNER: Constipation, we guess

KIRBY BY AL ORTEGA; LEE BY RON GALELLA, KELLY (NO HAIR) BY BRIAN D. TIDRAK; KELLY (WITH HAIR) BY PAUL SCHIBALDI

WHO DESERVES MORE CREDIT:

Stan Lee vs. Jack Kirby



Talk about titans: Both built the foundation of Marvel Comics. Created hundreds of characters and concepts together. Represent the model of comic book collaborations, successfully teaming for hundreds of stories over an 11-year period.

But when you talk about the legendary Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, there's been a lotta controversy over who actually deserves more credit for making Marvel Comics the powerhouse it continues to be today.

Lee, the savvy scripter/editor of all of Marvel's early hits. Kirby, the explosive, epic artist of most of Marvel early hits. But while Kirby defined the raw power of comic art, he needed Lee to make it work.

Sure, Lee–Marvel's wordsmith–needed talented artists to back him...and he knew that. But it can't be mere coincidence that whenever Lee immersed himself into a new comic venture, it turned into a hit. He had the noggin to harness great artistic talent–like Kirby and *Amazing Spider-Man*'s Steve Ditko–and tap it for mass appeal.

And let's not forget that Lee did not rely on Kirby to make a certain webslinger work.

Plus, Lee did more for Marvel than simply write. He cannily used his editorial position to initiate the friendly "Marvel Bullpen" page, which spoke to fans as if they were all a part of the gilded comics fraternity. Lee made it feel cool to be a comic fan.

There's been a lotta ink slung over whether or not Lee–Marvel's lifelong company man–should've given Kirby more credit for their creations...and yes, he should have.

There probably wouldn't be a Marvel Comics without Kirby. But there *definitely* wouldn't be a Marvel Comics without Lee. He brought the best out of Kirby, who never again achieved the same level of success than when they worked together.

WINNER: Stan Lee

interesting? The *Daily Planet*, employer of Clark Kent which sparks plenty of Superman stories? Or the *Daily Bugle*, for which Peter Parker takes photos?

For our money, J. Jonah Jameson's daily rag's a lot more colorful than Perry White's.

The *Planet*'s pretty much a Superman-only staple. The *Bugle*, however, funnels information for the entire Marvel Universe. Sure, it employs Spider-Man's alter-ego, but ace reporter Ben Urich often appears in *Daredevil*. Heck, Publisher J. Jonah Jameson and editor-in-chief Robbie Robertson often bicker about headlines for the Avengers and Hulk.

Maybe the sports section could use a little work, but the *Bugle*'d be on our doorstep every morning.

WINNER: *Daily Bugle*

WHICH BABE SHOULD ARCHIE BAG:
Betty vs. Veronica

Don't you wish you had girl trouble like Archie Andrews?

We mean, cheez, the guy's got two gorgeous women pining for him. And both Betty Cooper and Veronica Lodge will claw each other's eyes out to get him. But if you ask us, Betty'll try harder to gain Archie's affections. And that's why this working-class chick should ultimately end up with the red-headed geek. She's the girl next door who's been rock-solid in her attention toward Archie.

The flighty Veronica—a prissy, pampered rich girl— has dropped Archie like a bad habit many times. Betty's always been there to pick our boy up.

That, and blondes have more fun.

WINNER: Betty

WHO'S THE BETTER BUTLER:
Jarvis vs. Alfred

"Master, those *Wizard* pests are at the door."

But whose manservant are we visiting? Our only two options: Bruce Wayne's trusty butler Alfred Pennyworth, and Avengers Mansion's Edwin Jarvis.

The only guy we'd want handing us Jello Jigglers is the caustic Alfred. Sure, Jarvis serves as a great bit player serving a flask of mead to Thor, but Alfred, playing the father figure, has actually gone into battle to help out Batman. We saw it most recently in "No Man's Land," when Alfred baited some bad guys for the Dark Knight to bust up. That earns our respect, big time.

So, Alfred, about those Jello Jigglers...

WINNER: Alfred

Agree? Disagree? *We wanna know about it! Give us hell or applaud us by going to our "Comics Greatest Debates" Message Board on wizardworld.com.*

new millennium new comics

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bea
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Mark Waid

sts
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Gate crasher™
art by
Amanda Conner

packin'
heat
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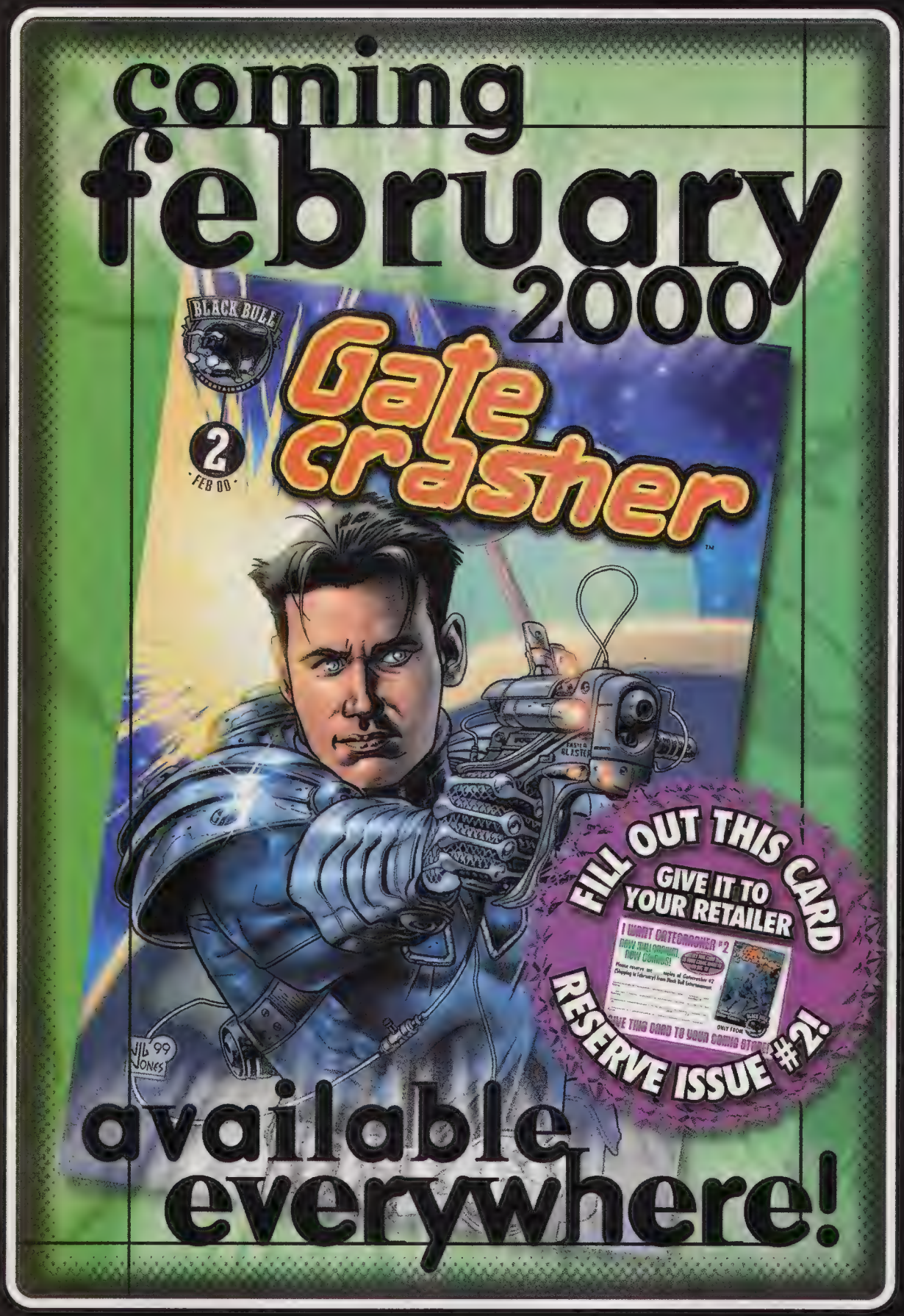
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CONTEST

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

The Seventh Annual Scavenger Hunt!

VOLTURE © F. PUJONG 15 MARIA 1985 TO RESEARCHERS, INC.

GRAND PRIZE! (1):

FIRST PRIZE (10):

RANDOMIZER (1):

STUPENDOUS PRIZES SUPPLIED BY:

Do you hate to lose? It doesn't matter if you hate to lose, 'cause this year we've got over 500 winners! Yup, over 500 winners! From original art to signed comics to a video game system of your choice, we're going all out to reward our diehard bounty hunters! That being said, we've just got two more words for ya: Get started!

GRAND PRIZE (1): One big booty grabber (the person with the highest point total) will become an instant art collector! We'll start you off with a beautiful framed piece from the Warner Bros. Studio Store, and then BAM! We're hittin' you off with 27 pieces of ORIGINAL COMIC BOOK ART donated by the coolest artists in the biz! Check out this all-star roster!

FIRST PRIZE (10): Ten determined diggers (the people with the ten next-highest point totals) each win a *Prince of Persia 3-D* PC game, a *Warhammer: Rites of War* PC game, a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* soundtrack, a *Rob Zombie Presents the Words and the Music of Frankenstein* CD and a *Mobile Suit Gundam0083: Stardust Memory* VHS boxed set including volumes 1-7! Multimedia at its finest, baby!

SECOND PRIZE (200): Two hundred crazy crumbsnatchers (chosen at random from every entry received with a point total greater than 150) will each win a grab-bag of five signed comics! You could end up with anything from *Kabuki* to *Star Wars*! Wanna know the cool people that hooked you up? Just check out our comic sponsor list!

THIRD PRIZE (300): Three hundred sneaky scoundrels (chosen at random from every entry received with a point total greater than 75) will each win a grab-bag of three variant-cover comics donated by Dynamic Forces!

RANDOMIZER (1): How cool is this Scavenger Hunt? It's so cool that you could actually win twice! After we've picked all of our regular winners, we're going to dump all their checklists into a big bag and pick one more winner to be our "Randomizer"! This random renegade will get to choose one of the following video game systems (bought by us—don't say we never did anything for ya) as his or her "Randomizer" prize: Sony PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Sega Dreamcast!

OKAY, NOW YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WIN, SO HERE'S HOW YOU WIN:

Below is a list of items we want you to scour the earth for. Each item has a point value next to it. Your objective? Collect as many points as possible by tracking down these items, pack them all up in ONE box, and send it all in to us. Make sure you include the official "Scavenger Hunt" checklist card that came with this issue, cause you get five points just for filling it out. For even more points, try to find the Wizard logo hidden in several comic books shipping in December. For every different page (or copy of a page) you send in that has the Wizard logo in its story art, you get five extra points. Where exactly do you look? Check out our comic sponsor list! Each sponsor has taken the time to hide the Wizard logo in exactly one of their books in December, so hit those shelves! Want to earn even more points? We've got one last way for you to do it. Just log on to wizardworld.com and play the "Scavenger Hunt Bunny Charades Game!" Write the correct answer on the checklist (found in this very issue's polybag) and a final five points are yours. Remember, every point counts! Good luck, and may the For...ahhh, fergit it.

STUFF TO GATHER (AND POINTS):

A business card from a comic shop (5)
Something from either *Final Fantasy I, II, III, IV* or *V* (5)
Photo of someone's tattoo (5)
Name tag of an employee (not you) from any store (5)
A photo of Jennifer Aniston (pre-nose job) (10)
A non-U.S. newspaper (front page only) (10)
A photo of you and a midget (10)
An issue of *Peter Porker, the Spectacular Spider-Ham* (10)
A neon-green Superball (5)
Placemat from White Castle or In-And-Out Burger, your choice (5)
A store receipt for exactly fifty-three cents (5)
A ticket from a "take a number" machine (5)
A fortune-cookie fortune with the word "success" on it (10)
A bookmark with a kitten on it (5)
A dreidel (5)
A comic book with a word balloon on the cover (10)
Unopened Cracker Jack prize (5)
A letter to you postmarked from Alaska or Hawaii (10)
A business card from a proctologist (10)
A blank piece of stationery from an attorney's office (5)
A Burger King crown (5)
A drink coaster with something Irish on it (5)
Blank score sheet from a bowling alley (5)
Bus schedule (5)
Change of address form (5)
Religious pamphlet (5)
A pack of matches from a restaurant where a person's name is part of the restaurant (5)
Non-beige chopsticks (10)
Magazine (NOT newspaper) article on something going on in Iowa (10)
A bar of soap from a hotel still wrapped with the hotel logo on it (5)
Embarrassing photo of yourself holding a copy of *Wizard* (25)
A shopping bag from Victoria's Secret (10)
An election flyer from ANY candidate (5)
A fancy-drink umbrella (5)
A lobster bib (an extra 5 points if there's a lobster wearing a bib on the bib. And no, you can't draw the lobster on yourself.) (5) or (10)
3-D glasses (5)
A fruit-shaped air-freshener (5)
A "Bazooka Joe" comic, NOT in English (10)
A soccer trading card (10)
Photo of yourself in front of the *Wizard* #100 retail poster (5)
Proof of purchase to Boo Berry cereal (10)
The Wizard Scavenger Hunt Checklist, filled out completely (5)

Official checklist found in this issue's polybag!

PIRATES' SCROLL

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Acclaim Comics, Artis/Avalon Studios, Awesome Entertainment, Chaos! Comics, Dark Horse Comics, DC/Wildstorm Comics, Dreamwave Productions, Image Comics, Marvel Comics, Next Entertainment, Oni Press, Sirius Entertainment, Top Cow Productions, Warner Bros. Studio Store, Dynamic Forces, SSI, Red Orb Entertainment, Bandai, Universal Music, TVT Records, their immediate families and people who wade through legal-size type in the hopes of finding some obscure joke. Get a job, hippie! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, email address and telephone number with area code on the official Scavenger Hunt checklist card and include it with your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Each entry must be mailed in a single, secured package or envelope. All photos become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. Mail each entry separately to: "Wizard Scavenger Hunt VII" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. All entries and all rights relating thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Beware the ass-donut! Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 31, 2000. Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Entertainment based on greatest point total with random drawing breaking all ties. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about February 29, 2000.

For a list of winners, available after April 17, 2000, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Wizard Scavenger Hunt VII" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

HURRY!

Deadline is JANUARY 31, 2000!

"Scavenger Hunt" Important Do's and Don'ts

1. Do use only one package to send everything in, no matter how big it is. If you send in more than one, we'll count each as a separate entry and that's not good for you.
2. Do use the official "Scavenger Hunt" checklist that came in this issue. It's an easy five points if you can manage to fill it out right.
3. Do not send in multiples of any item. You can only score the points one time.
4. Do not send Polaroids for any of your photo items (we want prints!)
5. Do send your entry to:

"Wizard Scavenger Hunt VII"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

Psycomic.com

require 'ioctl.ph';
$getp = &TIOCGETP
or die "NOTIOCGETP";
$sgttyb_t = "ccccs";
if (ioctl STDIN...

If we Shadows have offended, Think but this, and all is . . .

$f(x) = (5x^3(x-3y^2))$
$\Rightarrow \delta x/\delta y = 15x^2 \ldots$

CHOOM! POOM zakk! KABAAM KRAK!

For People Who See Sound Effects

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1999 10

BEST OF THE BEST 99

'Wizard' picks the finest 1999 had to offer... and what to look forward to in 2000

By the Wizard Staff

BEST COMIC BOOK SERIES: EARTH X

No one understands the bleak world of *Earth X* better than Peter Parker.

"Who's gonna shout 'Save me, save me,'" a dejected Parker asks in issue #1, "when everyone can save themselves?"

The brainchild of creators Alex Ross and Jim Krueger, *Earth X* knocked comics for a loop in 1999, earning its place as our Book of the Year with its portrayal of a doomed world where up is down, day is night and Marvel's core superheroes are reduced to the level of the people they were sworn to protect.

At its heart, the 14-issue mini-series depicts the end of the world, a future reality where humanity is locked in a constant struggle, against both the Skull, a 10-year-old neo-Fascist with the power to control men's minds, and the mutagenic effects of Plague X, which gave every man, woman and child on the planet superpowers.

The strength of the series lies not in the way its creators handle a race of super-powered humans, however. No, it revolves around the travails of Marvel's classic characters, heroes who somehow remain true to their core values and ideals as the world crumbles around them.

"Alex knows, almost instinctively, what is at the heart of each character and how to capture that with his painting and storytelling," said Paul Dini, Ross' collaborator on *Superman: Peace on Earth* and *Batman: War on Crime*. "Whatever the character was in his first appearances is the fixed version of the character for Alex."

In *Earth X*, a demoralized Captain America renews his fight for freedom after encountering the villainous Skull in issue #4. Mr. Fantastic, now a seemingly-mad scientist, blames himself for the world's plight and obsesses in his search for a cure. The two heroes are linked in their efforts by Tony Stark, an aging recluse who battles the Skull with his Iron Avengers from the relative safety of his "iron bubble," a stronghold in which he, too, seeks to preserve humanity.

Earth X's creators bring a new look to the Marvel Universe and find innovative ways to handle the characters—and their powers. Issue #7 contains one of the best scenes in the series, in which Reed Richards "stretches" his brain—*his brain*—in order to use Cerebro, Professor X's mutant-finding computer, to aid his search for the key to a better future. Unfortunately for the good doctor, that future seems increasingly hopeless as the Skull continues his ominous, mind-bending march across America.

All in all, *Earth X* gives readers the greatest Marvel Universe they've ever seen, one that uses a dark, depressing dose of reality to bring out the best in Marvel's characters and give us hope for comics in the years to come.

That said, we just can't wait to see how the "end of the world" ends.

POWER SHIFT When Reed Richards stretches his brain to work Cerebro, *Earth X* morphed into a clear winner.

2000'S COMIC TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: PUNISHER

It's heavy hitters handling a heavy hitter. Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon, the creative team behind *Preacher*, will take their shot at Marvel's resident vigilante, *The Punisher*, in a 12-issue Marvel Knights mini-series in 2000. It's guaranteed to have crime, violence and liters and liters of bad guy blood. In other words, it's gonna kick some serious ass.

BEST HERO: NIGHTWING

He's an Olympic-level acrobat. A world-class detective. A martial artist with few equals. But when he's out of costume, Nightwing's just another 20-something schmoe.

As Dick Grayson, he's got difficulties at work (juggling bartending and the Blüdhaven Police Academy), relationship troubles (with his landlord Clancy, former fiancee Koriand'r and ex-lover the Huntress) and issues with his father figure (take a wild guess).

But that's why we like the former Robin so darn much. We feel sorry for him. We empathize with him. Heck, sometimes we're even glad we're *not* him.

"Nightwing's driven…a little over-driven," *Nightwing* writer Chuck Dixon said. "Wanting to become a police officer so he can fight crime day and night, it's a little demented."

Despite that "dementia," Nightwing's cool. So cool, in fact, he can make it through an entire issue without ever appearing in his superhero togs, as in *Nightwing* #31.

Well, okay. He wears his costume on the first page of the issue, but that's only because he was too tired to take the darned thing off.

Touches like that make Nightwing all the more special. He's every bit the hero Batman is, but he retains the Joe Q. Public aspect, the, er, very active social life and day-to-day problems his long-eared mentor lacks.

Just look at the first third of Nightwing's year. It began with a bang—both on a superheroic and personal note.

An investigation into a series of gruesome murders lands our hero smack dab in the middle of a no-holds-barred union/gang war. Then he finds himself face to face (or rather, face to back) with the murderous Torque and winds up battling Blockbuster's goons alongside the Huntress.

It gets worse.

The murder investigation prompts Dick to duck out of a date with his landlord, a move which—understandably—pisses her off. On top of that, he struggles with the fact he lives in an apartment above former supervillain Amygdala, and starts to revisit his ill-advised feelings for the vengeful Huntress.

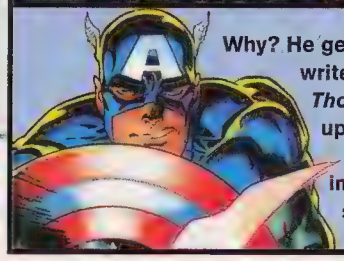
It seems, in a weird comic book physics sort of way, that for every super-heroic action by Nightwing, there's an equal (and often conflicting) personal reaction.

But then again, what would you expect?

He's only human…and we wouldn't have him any other way.

WINGING IT We don't wanna see what happens when Dick breaks another date…

2000'S HERO TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: CAPTAIN AMERICA



Why? He gettin' a millennium makeover, courtesy of new writer Dan Jurgens. Jurgens has already sparked *Thor* to new levels of excitement and he's digging up tons o' titillating thrills for *Tomb Raider*, so there's no reason to doubt he'll be triumphant in his efforts to turn America's icon back into the shield-slingin' superhero we all know and love.

BEST VILLAIN: ULTRON

Serial killers, mass murderers and genocidal maniacs got nothin' on Ultron.

The Avengers' über-foe, Ultron never really warranted his reputation as a take-no-prisoners, kill-'em-all villain—at least not until now.

In the pages of the *Avengers*' "Ultron Unlimited" storyline, the android obliterated the European country of Slorenia, systematically eradicating every man, woman, child and CNN cameraman within its borders.

By doing so, he raised the villain-o-meter for other Marvel bad guys, and established a diabolical precedent which won't likely be topped anytime soon. The hands-down winner of our 1999 Best Villain of the Year Award, Ultron's appearance in *Avengers* #19-#22 made for what could very well be the best story in the team's history.

It's fitting in a way, seeing as Ultron is, himself, one of the most significant players in the Avengers' storied history. Brought to life as part of an artificial intelligence experiment by Dr. Hank Pym, Ultron strives for one thing—the absolute destruction of all biological life on the planet.

With a persistence comparable to the roaches at the local fast food joint, Ultron regularly returns to plague his "father," who—along with his teammates—stands as the biggest obstacle in his quest to perpetuate a wholly mechanized society.

Oddly enough, until he eradicated millions of people earlier this year, the most consequential by-product of Ultron's perverse mission has been the creation of the robotic Avenger, the Vision.

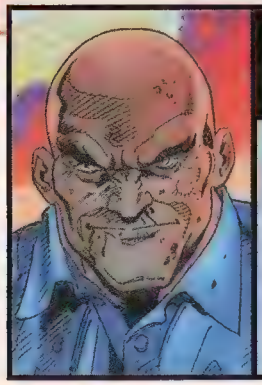
Since Ultron's father, mother (the Wasp), son and ex-daughter-in-law (the Scarlet Witch) are all Avengers, the adamantium monster considers himself part of the family. In fact, those family ties play a major factor in "Ultron Unlimited," as the mechanical demon records his family's personalities to use as the templates for his new robotic race.

Let's not forget that, along the way, he thoroughly trashed not one, but *two* teams of Avengers.

Despite his eventual defeat, it's a sure bet Ultron will return, ready to top his latest killing spree. But no biological inhabitant of the Marvel Universe should ever feel safe again.

Just ask the people of Slorenia.

TIN MAN If Ultron only had a heart, he may not've murdered the entire Slavic nation of Slorenia.



2000'S VILLAIN TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: LEX LUTHOR

Luthor's returning to the spotlight, and DC's heroes are gonna have a helluva time ignoring the glare off his head. Metropolis' second favorite son's gonna make monthly misery for the Man of Steel, and word has it he's got plans to rebuild Gotham City. If that ain't enough, Luthor's Injustice Gang is expected to bring about the death of a JLAer. All in all, Y2K's sure to bring this dastardly bald bastard back to his rightful place at the top of evil's evolutionary ladder.

BEST WRITER: ALAN MOORE

The man can write.

Alan Moore, who reinvented comics with the *Watchmen* mini-series more than a decade ago, rocked the comic world again this year with his America's Best Comics line, a WildStorm/DC imprint that lives up to its lofty name.

Take one look at his amazing *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* mini-series and the ongoing *Tom Strong*, *Promethea*, *Tomorrow Stories* and *Top Ten*, and you'll see exactly why Moore stands supreme as our Writer of the Year.

The reclusive scribe began his rise back to the top with the *League*. In the six-issue series, Moore re-crafts the icons of 19th century literature in his own inimitable style, making them a hoot to read.

How does he succeed where so many high school English teachers have failed? Simple—he puts himself into the characters.

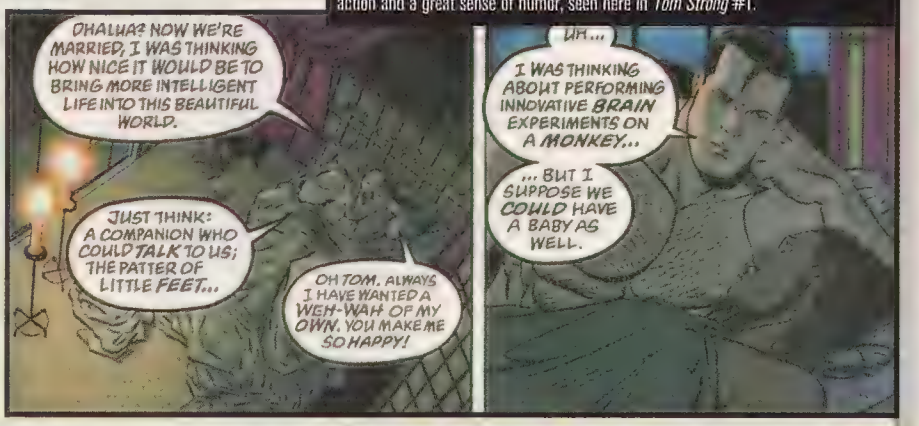
Throughout his career, Moore's been called both a devil worshipper and a god. He's been described as visionary, a comic pioneer and irreverent bogeyman. Elements of each can be seen in the cast of *League*. Allan Quatermain's a pioneering adventurer, an icon who reluctantly returns to the role that made him famous. Captain Nemo tackles an almost godlike role—a brilliant, yet perplexing, individual who describes himself as "no-one" while admitting nothing is beneath his notice. The Invisible Man enjoys coyly sticking it to "proper" society, as he did while reenacting the Immaculate Conception with the girls at a boarding school.

Intense characterization, realistic settings and sharp dialogue mark all of Moore's work and set *League* and the monthly ABC titles apart from the other books on the market. Nowhere are those features more evident than in *Top 10*, a comic about a team of super-cops in Neopolis, a grim, super-powered urban landscape that mixes the best and worst of both Harlem and Park Avenue.

Top 10's sprawling cast of characters is more well-developed than any television ensemble, and the interaction between those characters puts "NYPD Blue" to shame. In issue #3, Sarge (a talking dog) deftly sidesteps the fact he sees Officer Li buck naked—'cause she's "clothed" in colored pigments and dogs are color blind—by telling her he's only attracted to other canines. He's lying, of course, and in a typical male/dog fashion, Sarge runs off to share his deception with his friends at the precinct.

Unique spins like that can be found in all of the ABC titles, whether it's a cow's ass clogging a black hole in *Tomorrow Stories* or a talking monkey debating an android butler in *Tom Strong*.

"Genius" is a term thrown around a little too flippantly these days, but Moore fits the bill better than anyone else in the industry. His work in 1999 sets the tone for the way comics can be—no, *should* be done in the 21st century.

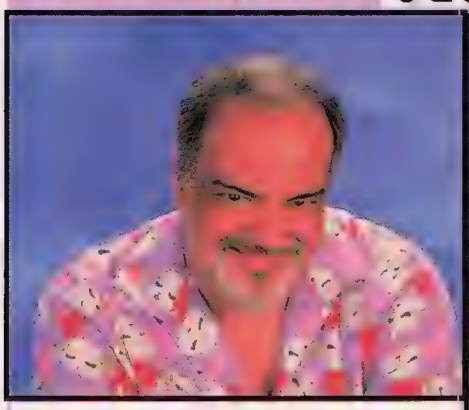


GIMME MOORE, BABY With ABC, Moore's in rare form, giving readers great action and a great sense of humor, seen here in *Tom Strong* #1.

2000'S WRITER TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: JEPH LOEB

He's starting the century off right, working his writing wizardry on the two biggest icons in comic books. He's got Dark Knight fans squirming in anticipation of the ending to *Batman: Dark Victory*, and brought Superman back from a deep sales freeze. The first issue of Loeb's *Superman* revamp flew off the shelves faster than a speeding bullet...and he's just getting started.

BEST ARTIST: GEORGE PÉREZ



Maybe George Pérez gets paid by the line.

You'd think so, as it would explain the incredible amount of detail the awesome artist includes in every issue of *Avengers*. Pérez's highly detailed pages assault the optic nerves, assail fans with incredibly ornate backgrounds, besiege them with powerfully depicted emotional reactions and blast them with earth-shattering brawls.

With talent like that, it's pretty easy to see why he's taking home his second consecutive Best Artist of the Year award.

"There's only one George," *Avengers* scribe Kurt Busiek said. "George never rests, never figures he's good enough. He looks for chances to go wild, to do more."

In *Avengers* #20, Busiek asked Pérez to draw a scene where the heroes walk into a secret military briefing area to meet some generals. Busiek expected a simple panel, a straightforward shot of some characters shaking hands.

He got a whole lot more.

Pérez made it virtually a double-page spread, shot from above, down a three-level well of technology and military technicians, down to where the Avengers were greeting the generals at the bottom.

"It was absolutely stunning," Busiek said. "An example of George looking for a place that he could do more so that it would serve the story."

In *Avengers* #10, Busiek plotted a full-page spread that contained 55 Avengers villains. Pérez added another 24.

It's that drive, that willingness to take the extra step that makes Pérez one of the best in the business. He possesses the rare ability to raise his collaborators to another level, to elevate a story to new heights.

Everything he draws is worth looking at, and his pages never disappoint—they're bigger, bolder and cooler than anything else in comics. And if he *did* get paid by the line…?

He'd earn his paycheck.

LINE ART We dare you to count the amount of lines Pérez puts in his artwork. G'head.

2000'S ARTIST TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: J.G. JONES

No surprise here. On Marvel's *Black Widow*, Jones proved he has a detailed style that's hard to match, combining hot chicks with some of the most intense action scenes we've seen in a while. It's also no surprise fans've picked up on this, too–they voted him the superstar artist of the next century in a recent poll. Who are we to argue?

BEST MOMENT: AVENGERS CONFRONT ULTRON

It began with the murder of countless innocents...and ended with seven simple words.

The adamantium despot known as Ultron made his mark on the Marvel universe in 1999 by eradicating the inhabitants of the tiny nation of Slorenia, his latest—and most brutal—attempt to eradicate life on Earth.

The Avengers assembled in response to the dastardly deed, but nagging self-doubt echoed in the minds of Earth's Mightiest Heroes. The Wasp worried about the effect Ultron's rampage would have on the mind of her missing husband and Ultron's creator, Giant Man; Iron Man shuddered at the thought of technology's dark, soulless side; Captain America flashed back to the genocidal horrors of World War II; and rookie member Firestar questioned her role against a villain feared by even the strongest of her teammates.

Nevertheless, the Avengers swung into action, hurtling into the fray head-on.

The first of the heroes fell during a reconnaissance mission, when a faction consisting of Wasp, Vision, Wonder Man and the Scarlet Witch got trounced by an army of Ultrons. The squad's last standing member, Wonder Man, took a severe beating, the robots' adamantium fists methodically pounding the ionic Avenger into submission.

Backed by an assault force of 20,000 U.N. soldiers, the remaining Avengers battled Ultron's forces on Slorenian soil, confronting both robotic troops and the cybernetically controlled corpses of the villain's first victims.

Finally, they reached the object of their fight—Ultron 16—and were nearly killed as the laughing monster thwarted their every effort. The heroes somehow found the strength to mount one final attack, a united effort that fried the robot to the core.

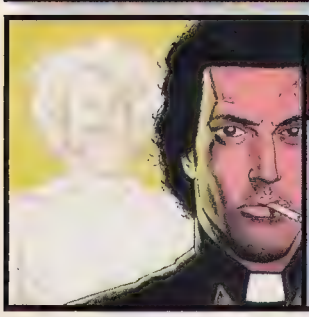
The exhausted heroes pressed on, only to be attacked by hundreds of additional Ultrons. Just then, the recon team broke free of Ultron's shackles, only to hear their robotic captor pronounce their death sentence. At that instant, the facility sizzles with energy behind Ultron, setting the stage for our Best Moment of 1999.

Ultron turns from his murderous intentions, his glowing eyes fixating on a battered and tattered lineup of heroes—Firestar, Black Panther, Iron Man, Captain America, Thor.

His clothes torn, his hammer crackling with energy, the God of Thunder stares down the villainous robot with gritted teeth.

"Ultron," he says. "We would have words with thee."

UH-OH Do you think Ultron should be A) pissing oil in his shiny whiteys, or B) in awe of Thor's machoness?



2000'S MOMENT TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: PREACHER VS. GOD

We've waited four years and over 60 issues for this brawl pitting *Preacher* star Jesse Custer against the Supreme Being. In one corner, there's the Almighty, who's fled Heaven to sow His holy oats. In the other, there's Jesse, an ornery Texas reverend who possesses the one thing God's afraid of: the Genesis power, which Jesse's gonna use to kick God's butt for shirking His heavenly duties. Either way, it'll be an ass-whuppin' of Biblical proportions.

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BEST OF THE REST

The Littler Big Things of 1999

BEST VERSACE IMPRESSION
Big Barda wears Plastic Man as a dress. *JLA* #33

BEST MONKEY
Solomon. *Tom Strong*

BEST RAZOR EMPORSEMENT
Savage Dragon #64

BEST BREATHER
The Incredible Hulk inhales Mr. Fantastic. *Contest of Champions II* #2

BEST HAL JORDAN MOMENT
We forget.

BEST REASON TO TURN VEGETARIAN
The Meat Man…uh…bags a woman made entirely of meat products. *Preacher* #48

BEST USE OF DUCT TAPE
Captain America's shattered shield. *Captain America* #22

BEST IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
The Invisible Man's sexual romp through Miss Rosa Coote's Correctional Academy for wayward Gentlewomen. *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* #2

BEST CHILD ABUSE
Strapping Superboy to an atomic bomb by the JLA. *Superboy* #60

BEST PLACE TO BE A FLY ON THE WALL
Buffy and friends hold a slumber party. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* #6

■ The *Wizard* Staff

BEST NEW CHARACTER: TOM STRONG

Pulp fiction's caught its second wind.

No, we're not talking about Quentin Tarantino, we're referring to the 1930s roots of 1999's best new character—Tom Strong.

The star of Alan Moore's America's Best Comics line, Strong's a walking contradiction. Both man and superman, he's a futuristic throwback, a nouveau classic—a modern superhero who traces his roots to the days before the first superhero.

Fitting then, that his origin involves a shipwreck, an event Moore subtly uses to pay homage to some of the great pulp heroes who inspired Strong's creation.

Raised in gravity chamber on the island of Attabar Teru, Tomas "Tom" Strong grows up stronger and tougher than the average Joe. When a volcanic eruption kills both his parents, Tom finds himself living with the island's natives, the Ozu, and develops an intellect that gives Reed Richards a run for his money. Upon reaching adulthood, Tom begins his crime-fighting in the "real world," becoming a legend in Millennium City.

Okay, so sometimes he lacks common sense. Case in point—he's in bed with his new wife, the island beauty Dhalua, talking about bringing a new intelligent life into the world. In a laugh out loud scene, he's caught off guard when Dhalua says she'd be happy to bear him a child.

"Uh…I was thinking about performing innovative brain experiments on a monkey," Tom says. "But I suppose we could have a baby as well."

In issue #5, Tom and Dhalua travel back in time to the ancient continent of Pangaea. After finishing his work, Tom gets frisky, totally unaware he's "seducing" a mold creature masquerading as his wife. "You're incredible. If feels like you're touching me everywhere at once," Tom says as the creature begins to envelop him in slime.

Despite situations like that, Tom Strong represents the pinnacle of human perfection. He's a great husband, a great father and a great guy.

How great?

Well, he could wear a "Women want me, men want to be me" T-shirt around the *Wizard* offices without catching hell.

Need we say more?

STRONG MAN: Moore proves month after month that only the Strong survive. And own talking monkeys.

NEW CHARACTER TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON IN 2000 PONCHO JONES

Uhh…what can we say? Meet the next Pokémon, the next "Friends" and the next Britney Spears all balled up into one (minus breast implants). He's Poncho Jones, and he's coming soon–Latin flava an' all–to take the comics world by storm! Or something.

READ IT WITH THE LIGHTS DOWN LOW...

NEIL GAIMAN'S MIDNIGHT DAYS

Hard-to-find tales from HELLBLAZER, SWAMP THING, and SANDMAN MIDNIGHT THEATRE, now collected in a single volume. And featuring a never-before-seen SWAMP THING story, newly illustrated by **Stephen Bissette** and **John Totleben**

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REBELLION. REVOLT. REV

Seven years, seven guys, one company: *Wizard* catches up with **THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF IMAGE** on where it's headed and how it got there

THE WIZARD Q&A

BY CHRIS HUTCHINS

Mutiny *with* a bounty. That was the order of the day back in 1992 when seven of the industry's top talents—Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Marc Silvestri, Jim Valentino, Erik Larsen and Whilce Portacio—did the unthinkable. They walked away.

Led by the then 22-year-old Liefeld, "The Magnificent Seven" left Marvel Comics. They wanted control of their creations. They wanted to create a company that put the creator first. It took arrogance and courage to do it...but they had plenty to go around.

And they did it. Image Comics rocked the industry. Books sold in the millions. Fans lined up for hours at comic conventions just to get a glimpse of these upstarts and an autograph.

But despite the seven's big ideas and big plans, there was big trouble that first year. Sure, issues sold like crazy—when they came out. Which, many times, was months after the books were originally scheduled to ship. The founders stumbled over publishing questions DC and Marvel had ironed out long ago. "We never said we were businessmen," says McFarlane, "but we were willing to go out there and skin our knees."

Knees got bloody. Portacio vanished from the company almost immediately. Silvestri left in 1996 over a feud with Liefeld, then returned when Liefeld in turn, left. And Lee, one of the biggest guns in the biz, sold his share of Image to DC in 1998.

But Image is still the No. 3 publisher in the business. Over the last seven years, the company has given the middle finger to doomsaying critics. It's raised the bar for the treatment of creators in the industry. It revolutionized comics production: Higher paper quality and computer coloring are now industry standards.

Wizard recently caught up with "The Magnificent Seven" to chat about the company they founded, and what they're up to now. One's a self-proclaimed Antichrist. Another says working at Marvel and DC is for "wieners." You'll find out who owes his Image career to a night in a hotel room...and who used to handle radioactive material for a living.

So read on. See what the revolution was all about.

VOLUTION.

PHOTO BY GARFIE SHAMUS

TODD McFARLANE

Todd McFarlane talks fast. Damn fast. The man doesn't hold back, either. He tosses out insults that'd make Howard Stern cringe. But the 38-year-old knows all this. "You'll find 20 people who say I'm a saint," McFarlane says, "and you'll find 20 people who think I'm the Antichrist."

McFarlane is a force of nature in the comics business. Image's *Spawn* #1 sold 1.7 million copies—still a record for an independent comic. Then came the toys, the animated series and the movie.

McFarlane is abrasive, egotistical...and brutally honest. But he backs it all up with an unparalleled success story. The man's worth millions of dollars. He has a growing media empire.

And he's still white hot.

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI

EYE MAC Now look deep into my eyes and repeat after me: "I wuv Spawny Guy. Spawny Guy is my master. Tweet him like a king."

WIZARD: How close are you with the other six founders?

McFARLANE: If I talk to Whilce every three years, that's a lot. I still like Valentino. I've always gotten along with Marc Silvestri; we've been the most truthful with each other over the years.

Rob? In all honesty, Rob is as good as dead to me. I doubt I'll ever make any amends with him. We're done.

I like Jim Lee, but I don't like Jim "DC" Lee as much as I liked Jim "Image" Lee. And then there's Erik. He's probably the purest of all of us. Erik is a guy who said, "I just want to draw my funnybooks my way." He's never derailed from that.

So you weren't keen on Jim Lee's departure?

For me, once I left Marvel Comics, I left the equivalent of high school. Do I have some fond memories? Sure. But do I intend to go *back* to high school? Never. With that mindset, it was mind-boggling that Jim would go there voluntarily.

What Image moment sticks out in your mind the most?

Having to kick Rob out. When you go into partnerships, you don't foresee the day when it's going to fail. It was a tough thing to do. We were close buddies, Rob and I. I sort of saw him as a younger brother. But now, it's like we don't exist on the same planet, right?

First Liefeld left. Then Lee. So who's next?

Either Marc Silvestri or myself. Marc and I have built these mini-empires—we have the most to gain or lose by leaving. But as long as I feel Image is something that won't hinder my momentum, I'm with it hopefully till the day I die.

Do you ever think about drawing comics again?

Artistically, I never thought I was as good as people said I was. I have minimal fear in me, but one of the fears I do have is if I did come back, people would see me as the fraud I was. I saw it happen with Jim when he did *Divine Right*. Nobody cared.

So with all your multimedia success, why stay at Image?

Comic books are still dear to me, almost to the point where I've been dumb about it. I've probably stuck around longer than I should because I've had better options in other things.

But another part of me says if nobody else wants to hold the mantle of Image, I will. Even if it's just out of spite. 'Cause I'm that kind of guy.

"Rob is as good as dead to me."
–TODD McFARLANE, on his former partner Rob Liefeld

THE IMAGE TIMELINE

A LOOK AT IMAGE COMICS' MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Compiled by Russ Burlingame

1986

FEBRUARY–First appearance of Savage Dragon (*Megaton* #3)

1992

FEBRUARY–Rob Liefeld, Whilce Portacio, Todd McFarlane, Jim Valentino, Erik Larsen, Marc Silvestri and Jim Lee break away from Marvel to form Image Comics, an imprint under Malibu Comics

APRIL–*Youngblood* #1 ships

MAY–*Spawn* #1 sells 1.7 million copies, setting new independent-sales record

JUNE–*Savage Dragon* #1

JULY–*Brigade* #1 ships, expanding Liefeld's line

AUGUST–*WildC.A.T.s* #1, *ShadowHawk* #1, *Cyberforce* #1

OCTOBER–McFarlane makes first major convention appearance as "creator of Spawn"; *WetWorks* #1

NOVEMBER–*WetWorks* #2 scheduled to ship; *Pitt* #1 ships; *Operation: Urban Storm* (intended to help Los Angeles riot victims following Rodney King verdict) scheduled to ship but never comes out

JIM LEE

Jim Lee has been called "The Golden Boy of Comics."

Believe it or not, the 35-year-old's first job was in a research lab, swabbing radioactive Tritium. It gets better: Lee graduated from Princeton University with a medical degree, but decided to get into comics. He's a self-taught artist.

That's one helluva teacher. At Marvel Comics, Lee dazzled *Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men* readers with incredible line work and attention to detail. And when he joined Image, he built comics' Ft. Knox: WildStorm Studios. The Homage Comics, America's Best Comics and Cliffhanger lines are just a few of the gold bars in his vault.

But in 1998, Lee shocked fans when he sold WildStorm Studios to DC Comics. He doesn't regret leaving the company he helped create.

To him, WildStorm's future is bright. Golden.

WIZARD: Are you glad you left Marvel?

LEE: Of course. It was the best decision of my career. It was a wonderful thing we did, and a great experience for me. If I could go back in time and do it all over again, I would. No question about it On some level, I wish it could've continued—I wish the business were healthy enough to allow us to continue. On the other hand, where we are now is a very enviable spot. We're very happy with our role within the DC infrastructure.

Given its setbacks, are you surprised Image lived through that first year?

We made every mistake in the first year, yet we still survived. That's a testament to the power and momentum we had. But I also think that was part of our undoing—people leaving, people getting kicked out, and whatnot. Image isn't the same as it was before—nor should it be. Every company changes over the years. That's a given.

Would you consider Image a success?

On many, many, levels it was. Image changed the business; it changed how creators are treated and perceived by the publisher.

But it's not like we invented creators' rights. We just took the movement one step further. You have to go to other people—Neal Adams, Frank Miller—to see where it first began.

Do you want to draw a monthly book again?

I do emotionally. But realistically, I think those days are behind me. There are a number of special projects I'll be doing, though. There's a sci-fi project I'll be doing for the ABC line with Alan Moore. It should be out next year. There's an eight-page Batman story I'll be doing with Warren Ellis.

Do you miss Image?

Sure. I miss the camaraderie and the goofiness of it all, more than anything. It was a very atypical kind of business, but there were a lot of headaches involved too. But I'm much happier now. I made the right decision leaving Marvel, and I made the right decision leaving Image.

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRATUD

"I made the right decision leaving Marvel, and I made the right decision leaving Image."

–JIM LEE, on his career

LEE MAJOR No, it isn't art. It was medicine. At Princeton. So hit the books, fanboy.

1993

JANUARY–*Darker Image* #1

FEBRUARY–*StormWatch* #1; *Darker Image* #2 scheduled to ship, but doesn't

MARCH–Image's "next generation" begins: *The Maxx*, *Bloodstrike*, *Trencher* and *Tribe*; *Tribe* #1 sells 1 million copies, "the best-selling African-American comic in history," says creator Todd Johnston

MAY–*Trencher* #1; *Shaman's Tears* #1

JUNE–Image/Valiant "Deathmate" crossover starts–only Valiant's books ship; Image's books ship four months later

JULY–Ads run for new WildStorm teen series *Gen X*; *Savage Dragon* #2 features Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles; *Pitt* #2 ships, 8 months after #1

AUGUST–Image dumps all non-founder books (*Tribe*, *Trencher*, *Shaman's Tears*, etc.) except *The Maxx* and *Pitt*, claiming low sales, lateness and not fitting into company's superhero vision

SEPTEMBER–*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles /Savage Dragon Crossover Special* #1

Chronic lateness. A messy Image divorce. Theft accusations.

What *hasn't* plagued Rob Liefeld's career? The 30-year-old's books habitually shipped late, he was accused of swiping other artists' concepts, he left Image on unfriendly terms and his surging Awesome Entertainment hit a brick wall of financial difficulties. And then there's the lack of focus—Liefeld hasn't done more than six consecutive monthly issues of a comic since Image began.

But truth be told, Liefeld has some of the biggest cojones in the biz. When he was making millions at Marvel, Liefeld led the Image walk-off. And he willingly walked away from Image back in 1996 to start his own company.

Yeah, Liefeld's had some tough times. But "It's made me stronger," he says, "and I wouldn't trade anything for that."

ROB LIEFELD

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

S.S. LIEFELD Todd calls Rob "Little Buddy." So who gets to play Lovey?

WIZARD: Jim Valentino credits Image's start with you. Is that right?

LIEFELD: Honestly? Yeah. If anyone tells you differently, they're lying. [*Laughs*] Image Comics—the name, the logo, the company—was all my idea. I designed it, named it. The record books will back that up.

Where do the record books stand on your Image departure?

I got out of Marvel because of the politics. I had to get out of Image for the same reason. Somewhere in '96, things were already uptight because Marc Silvestri had already left the company. Supposedly it was because I had been pursuing one of Marc's artists at the time: Mike Turner, who was going to do a mini-series for me, and then go back to Top Cow.

Then there was the [Marvel freelance project] "Heroes Reborn." Some at Image were vocally against that. In Todd's mind, [Jim Lee and I] were becoming the competition. In my mind, Marvel was never going away; they were the No. 1 company. Todd always referred to me as "Little Buddy." But he wasn't happy with what "Little Buddy" was going to do.

So you left Image and founded Awesome Entertainment. But why haven't you worked on an ongoing title since?

Up until recently, it's been a time constraint. I sold some movie options. I've been hired to write two more. I enjoy that. I want to direct. But I will never abandon my comic book company. Even if I'm publishing one or two books, I'll never leave.

But why go back to Marvel's Cable?

They told me one of my creations wasn't doing so well on the charts and asked if I'd help out. *Cable* is a legacy of mine, and I don't want to see it canceled. If I can turn that around, I will.

In the end, are you glad you were part of Image?

We were all a great cast of characters, and I have tremendous respect for those guys. What we started was a really good thing. I think the fact that it's still going speaks for itself. Being a part of that is something I wouldn't trade for the world.

"I have tremendous respect for those guys."

–ROB LIEFELD, about his old Image buddies

[illegible]–*Deathmate: Black* ships, featuring the first appearance of Gen[13].

[illegible]–*Gen X* ads change to *Gen[13]* due to "cease and desist" by Marvel, which is developing *Generation X*. Liefeld's *Angela* #1; *Deathmate: Red* finally ships; *Darker Image* #2 still hasn't shipped

1994

[illegible]–*Spawn* officially announced as top-selling single comic book for 1993

[illegible]–*Batman/Spawn* and *Spawn/Batman*; *Gen[13]* #1; *Pitt* #3 ships 7 months after #2

[illegible]–First *Spawn* spin-off, *Violator* #1 ships; Image experiments with crossovers and future timelines as several books release an early #25 for "Images of Tomorrow"

[illegible]–*WetWorks* #1 ships 21 months late

[illegible]–Image creators swap books for a month in X-Month crossover; "WildC.A.T.s" cartoon debuts on CBS—but most watch "Batman: The Animated Series" instead

[illegible]–Todd McFarlane Productions releases its first toys

MARC SILVESTRI

Marc Silvestri got lucky.

The former *Uncanny X-Men* artist almost wasn't a part of Image. See, the 41-year-old Silvestri's an Image partner for one simple reason: he was at the same hotel as the other six founders. They sold him on the idea the day before resigning at Marvel Comics. Silvestri took a chance. It paid off.

Cyberforce, his first Image project, exploded onto the scene, but faded fast. A quick "fantasy"-based injection later, and suddenly Top Cow Productions materializes as...well, the Top Cow. Now there's hot titles including *Fathom*, *Rising Stars*, *Witchblade* and *Tomb Raider*. Big-name talent like Mike Turner and "Babylon 5" creator J. Michael Straczynski. And Hollywood ties: A "Witchblade" television show and an animated "Fathom" movie are in the works.

There's a directness about Silvestri that's appealing. When asked if he ever thought he'd be working on a movie in 1999, he laughs.

"No," he says. "I thought it would come a lot sooner."

WIZARD: Do you see yourself ever selling Top Cow to the highest bidder?

SILVESTRI: No. Todd and I share a closer business model than Jim [Lee] and I did. I like Hollywood. It's fun to play here. It's fun to bring what we do into another medium. I love comic books, and I'll always be doing comic books. It's a part of my life I'm not going to let go.

Top Cow's a multimedia force. So why stay at Image?

Even though there are just a few of us left, there's a feeling that we did something special together. And we really did. That was seven years ago, and we're still here. As Todd would say, "We're still pissing people off." [*Laughs*] That binds us. I'm proud I had something to do with Image's success. At the end of the day, I like being with these guys. It's like being on a winning baseball team.

Where does Rob Liefeld fit on this team?

That's something I'd rather not talk about. It's ancient history. I think everyone has learned their own personal lesson from that. But that was a few years ago. Whatever Rob does is his business, and whatever we do is our business.

Do you ever think about dusting off Cyberforce and relaunching it?

Oh yeah. Don't be surprised if it pops up again. I'm actually working on it right now, retooling it. It will have a different title, but people will recognize the concept. There is some interest in Hollywood for a Cyberforce-like property.

And I may be popping my head back in the art arena. I might surprise people. I've got the itch to do something lately, so we'll see.

"That's something I'd rather not talk about."
–MARC SILVESTRI, about Rob Liefeld

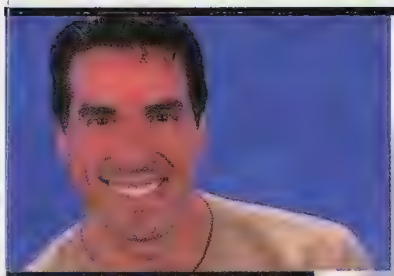

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

ON TOP Hey, get yer mind outta the gutter. Though Marc does like cows...

DECEMBER–WildC.A.T.s toy line released; still no *Darker Image* #2

1995

MARCH–*Gen13* #1 hits with 13 variant covers, virtually killing the variant cover trend; "Gen13" animated movie announced for video release in 1996

APRIL–"The Maxx" cartoon debuts on MTV

AUGUST–"Extreme 3000" brings another future

OCTOBER–Jeff Smith brings *Bone* to Image

OCTOBER 21–"Savage Dragon" cartoon premieres

OCTOBER 25–*Witchblade* #1 ships, fantasy angle catapults Top Cow to industry powerhouse; Dale Keown leaves Image

OCTOBER–No *Darker Image* #2 sightings yet

1996

FEBRUARY–Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld announce they're returning to Marvel to work on "Heroes Reborn"

JULY–Silvestri and Top Cow leave Image, citing Liefeld tried to raid its talent pool

SEPTEMBER–Liefeld resigns Image to avoid being voted out

NOVEMBER–Top Cow returns to Image

DECEMBER–Aliens descend from Topps when *Mars Attacks the Image Universe*; WildStorm's creator-owned imprint Homage Comics announced to launch with *Astro City*, *Leave it to Chance* and *Strangers in Paradise*; forget about *Darker Image* #2

1997

JANUARY–"Spawn" cartoon debuts on HBO; Pitt and Hulk crossover; Jim Valentino starts up Image's small-press line with *A Touch of Silver*

ERIK LARSEN

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI

Erik Larsen made it a habit of following in Todd McFarlane's footsteps. Literally.

When McFarlane left *Amazing Spider-Man* in 1990, Larsen took over penciling duties. Larsen took over McFarlane's adjectiveless *Spider-Man* soon afterward. Then he tossed it all away and jumped ship to Image. Just like McFarlane. "But I wasn't following Todd," the 37-year-old Larsen says, smiling. "Promise."

Maybe not, but like McFarlane, Larsen's made his mark in Image by sticking with one character all the way through: the Savage Dragon.

But enough about Larsen's résumé. The guy does an uncanny McFarlane impersonation. He cusses like a sailor. He's honest. And the jokes—and the four-letter words—keep comin'.

Don't say we didn't warn ya.

WIZARD: How does the future of Image look?

LARSEN: It always looks good. The only problem is there's nothing there that you're not bringing there. There isn't a Spider-Man or a Superman to tap. But if you've got the stones and the talent, this is the best game in town.

If there's anybody out there saying differently, they're lying. Working at other companies is for wieners who have no faith in their own ability. There's not another viable company out there that lets you keep your rights completely intact.

So why write for Marvel and DC?

I like the characters. I get a kick out of it. [*Smiles*] I have a tough time losing the fan in me. Even though there's a lot of bullsh--, and even though there are things I'm not allowed to do, I love it.

In regards to Image, what are you most proud of?

Sticking with the Dragon. The level the Dragon is now in terms of sales…[pauses]. Most companies cancel books when they get this low. But I have this huge story I want to tell. I'm the only guy who's going to tell it. It's going to get told. I've got to do that.

Was Rob Liefeld bad for Image?

I don't want to answer that. It's a dead horse. It was a choice, and we made it for the good of the company.

How about Jim Lee selling WildStorm to DC. Would you ever consider something like that?

[*Makes a disgusted sound*] No. To have somebody else tell me, "No, the Dragon would never do that"? Oh, f--- you. Not in a million years.

What's your fondest Image memory?

Those early Image meetings with Todd McFarlane when he wasn't wearing a shirt. [*Laughs*] Those meetings were nuts. I remember Todd would deal out *Spawn* pages like they were playing cards. We'd all take a stab at inking some of them during the meeting.

"To have somebody else tell me, 'No, the Dragon would never do that'? Oh, f--- you."

–ERIK LARSEN, about selling his creation

ERIK'S IDOL Larsen's always followed in Todd McFarlane's footsteps. All except the rich and famous part.

[illegible]–*Bone* leaves Image; *X-Men/WildC.A.T.s* #1 ships

[illegible]–Terry Moore announces *Strangers in Paradise* will leave Homage, issue #8 is last under imprint

[illegible]–"Spawn" movie opens, grosses $55 million (domestic)

[illegible]–*Divine Right* #1

[illegible]–David Mack (*Kabuki*) joins Image

[illegible]–WildStorm imprint Cliffhanger forms with *Crimson*, *Battle Chasers* and *Danger Girl*; *Witchblade/Tomb Raider* #1; *Darker Image* #2 still hasn't shipped

1998

[illegible]–Warner Bros. orders a "Witchblade" TV series to begin in fall of 1998

[illegible]–*Fathom* #1

[illegible]–Nope, still no *Darker Image* #2

1999

[illegible]–DC Comics signs Jim Lee to an exclusive contract, acquiring WildStorm and its many imprints: ABC, Homage and Cliffhanger

[illegible] 12–Todd McFarlane pays over $3 million for Mark McGwire's and Sammy Sosa's record-shattering home run baseballs

[illegible]–*Darkness/Batman* crossover; "Witchblade" TV talks continue and speculation begins about an animated "Fathom" movie

[illegible]–*Darker Image* #2 looking hopeless

2000

[illegible]–"Spawn" sequel scheduled

[illegible]–*Darker Image* #2? Ha.

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WHILCE PORTACIO

Just call him the fifth Beatle.

After swirling fans into a frenzy with his work on the *Punisher* and *Uncanny X-Men*, Whilce Portacio jumped aboard the Image ship. He shared a studio with Jim Lee and Marc Silvestri. His book, *WetWorks*, was set to blow fans away. And then...well, then the Philippines native disappeared.

Sure, *WetWorks* eventually came out through WildStorm, and Portacio recently helped form the successful Image imprint Avalon Studios. But you can't shake the feeling that Portacio was one gig away from hitting it big.

WIZARD: You were supposed to be an original Image founder, but quickly left the scene without producing a comic at the outset. What happened?

PORTACIO: My sister Gemma died of lupus at the start of Image. Her passing away was the first time I experienced the death of someone close to me.

After getting over the first stage of dealing with her "good-bye," it just didn't seem quite that important to concentrate on making lots and lots of money, or beating competitors. Some will say that in hindsight, my decision was an "impracticality." But I believe you make decisions in your life based on what you feel is best, right or wrong.

Do you regret not staying with Image longer?

No. But I regret the fame, in a sense that everyone was so busy, we didn't get to "play" like we used to. I remember one night we spent four hours having a "war" using rubber-band guns, plastic discs, BB guns. Those are the days I miss.

What's Image's future look like?

The sky's the limit. Ultimately, it was never about *us*, but about us getting the freedom to do what we felt was artistically right. So the future of Image is in the hands of the next batch. We made the playground. Now's their time to play.

GOT MILK? Good. Then check the carton and let us know if you've seen this man.

Are you and Jim Lee still close?

Jim and I started in the industry together. His work was the fire that kept my art developing. I owe him a lot personally. We used to have lots of quiet conversations during hard deadline times.

But now I don't think we could claim back what we all had together. Jim and I still have the days of our past together. They helped make us who we are now. They always keep us friends.

JIM VALENTINO

It just doesn't fit.

Unlike the other Image founders, Jim Valentino never had a chart-topper. In fact, the highest-profile gig Valentino ever had was Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*. And while his Image creation *ShadowHawk* started with a bang, it quickly faded when the initial Image hype died down.

Yet, fit in Image he does. As the current Image publisher, Valentino now recruits new talent for the core company, and deals with the day-to-day administration. "Actually," he says, "I just needed more stress in my life."

WIZARD: How did this whole Image thing start, anyway?

VALENTINO: I was there when it really started, in 1990. Erik Larsen, myself, Rob [Liefeld] and David Olbrich [then-Malibu Comics publisher] were at dinner. Rob asked David if he would publish a book by him. David laughed and said, "Of course!" And then Rob said, "How about a book by me, Erik and Jim?" Dave laughed and said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah!"

Overall, was Rob Liefeld bad for Image?

I don't want to answer that. It's water under the bridge. Rob and I had a chance to talk in San Diego [at the 1999 convention] and while we didn't necessarily bury the hatchet, we had a good talk.

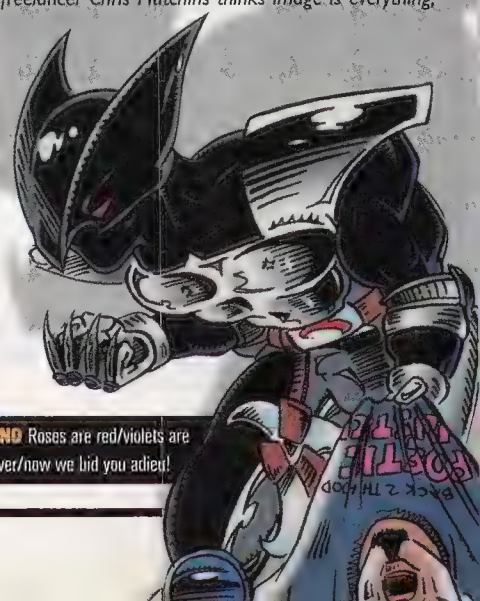
What's Image's next big "buzz book"?

There are lots of great books in 2000. *Spawn* #100 in July. *Savage Dragon* #75 in May. Top Cow is doing an Image crossover. Pat Lee is doing more *Darkminds*. But the next Image "buzz book"? That's something I can't talk about just yet. We have another atomic bomb on the way.

You haven't had a monster hit at Image in years. So why stay?

Since the moment we formed it, I've been one of Image's most fervent supporters. I truly believe a creator has the right to determine not only his fate, but the fate of his creation. I believe that with my heart and soul. And I don't think I'll ever stop believing that.

Kentucky-based freelancer Chris Hutchins thinks image is everything, thirst is nothing.



BE MY VALENTINO Roses are red/violets are blue/this story's over/now we bid you adieu!

OUR SISTER
CAN KICK YOUR SISTERS' BUTT.
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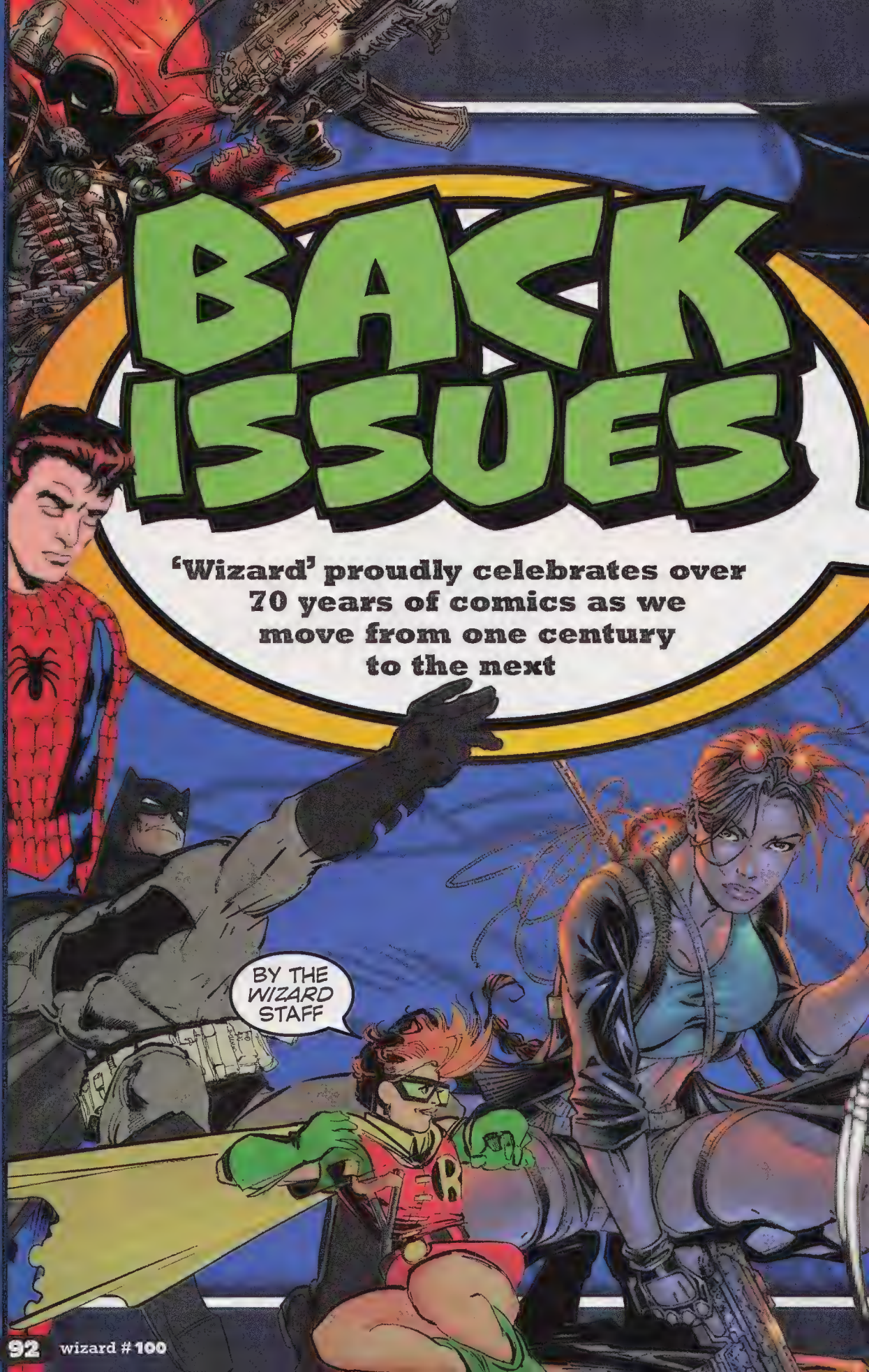

BACK ISSUES
'Wizard' proudly celebrates over 70 years of comics as we move from one century to the next
BY THE WIZARD STAFF

BATMAN KILLED WITHOUT IMPUNITY. SUPERMAN STARTED AS THE ULTIMATE VILLAIN. JACK KIRBY WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR SPIDER-MAN.
SOUND WEIRD? IT IS. IT'S THE 70-PLUS-YEAR HISTORY OF THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY, AND IT'S GOT MORE TWISTS AND TURNS THAN AN ENTIRE SEASON OF "THE X-FILES" MASHED TOGETHER. THE FLEDGLING COMIC BOOK ARTFORM'S TRAVELED A LONG, STRANGE ROAD: THE STRUGGLE FOR SALES DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION, NARROWLY SURVIVING A GOVERNMENT WITCH-HUNT, AND THE BIZARRE FASCINATION CRITICS HAD WITH ROBIN'S CROTCH (HONEST!). IT'S A WONDER COMICS--"THE GREAT AMERICAN ARTFORM"--SURVIVED AT ALL. BUT THEY DID. AND WIZARD'S GOING TO SHOW YOU HOW...
TURN THE PAGE AND SEE!

the 1930s

REALITY CHECK

"The Star-Spangled Banner" officially becomes the national anthem...**the Hindenburg blimp explodes**...Al Capone receives an 11-year prison sentence for tax evasion..."King Kong" smashes into theaters...radios everywhere blast Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds," terrifying thousands who believe Martians are actually invading the Earth.

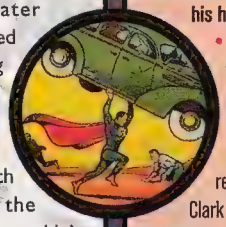
COMICS RELIEF

The United States desperately needed something to smile about. Economic depression still rocked the country. Another world war loomed on the horizon. And into this dreary landscape burst an explosion of comic books. In the early '30s, books like *Funnies on Parade* and *Famous Funnies* merely reprinted newspaper strips of popular characters like Prince Valiant and Terry & the Pirates. But all that changed in February 1935 with *New Fun Comics* #1, which featured new material starring Oswald the Rabbit, Jack Woods and Don Drake on the Planet Soro. With its large size and all-original format, *New Fun* revolutionized comics, kicking off a seven-decade love affair with the medium.

FUNNY MONEY The first real comic will only set you back a mere $40 grand!

TIMELY MANNER

Were the Nazis responsible for Marvel Comics? That's what the 1947 pamphlet *Secrets Behind the Comics* would have you believe. In this pamphlet written by Stan Lee, Timely Comics (which would later become Marvel) was created in 1939 to make young Americans aware of the dangers of Nazism and fascism. Thus was born *Marvel Comics* #1, starring the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner to fight the forces of evil worldwide. It wouldn't be until roughly 22 years later that Lee and Jack Kirby would reinvent the Torch and Subby alongside the Avengers and Fantastic Four.



THEY SAID IT...

"All the time we really felt that we had something that was very different. Something that the public would really take to its heart."

–JERRY SIEGEL on Superman

HOT STUFF

PRINCE VALIANT

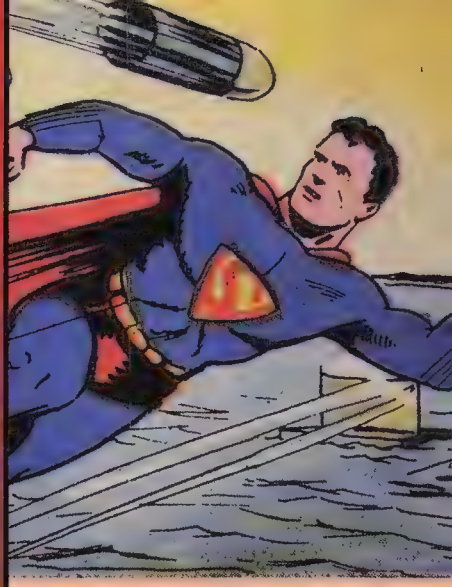
The inspiration for two movies, a cartoon, a comic series and still featured as a daily strip in 350 newspapers worldwide, the heroic Prince Valiant tried mightily to balance his throne and love life. His trademark bowl haircut has never changed.

TERRY AND THE PIRATES

Think James Bond meets Indiana Jones. Readers thrilled to the exotic adventures of our favorite sailor, who traveled to the Far East in search of wealth and adventure–and featured a bevy of beautiful female supporting characters.

DR. FU MANCHU

A villainous mad scientist who appeared in numerous books and early issues of *Detective Comics*, Fu Manchu was dropped by DC when author Sax Rohmer began demanding exorbitant royalty payments.



HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

He's the original American superhero. He's raced trains, hoisted planes and broken chains. And with his first appearance in 1938's *Action Comics* #1, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's legendary creation Superman paved the way for the Spider-Mans and Wolverines of today with his flashy costume and fantastic superpowers. But here's a few things we bet you didn't know about Big Blue.

LITTLE-KNOWN SUPERMAN FACTS

- ***Action Comics* #1's cover–Superman's first appearance–was nearly vetoed because it seemed too preposterous to show a man lifting a car over his head.**
- Superman first appeared as a bald villain with mental powers in Siegel and Shuster's pet project, a mimeographed magazine called *Science Fiction*, in January 1933.
- Superman's alter ego, mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent, was named after actor Clark Gable, who was tremendously popular at the time.
- Superman's original foes weren't Lex Luthor and Doomsday–but rather corrupt political lobbyists, lynch mobs and drunk drivers.
- Clark Kent's first reporting job came at the *Daily Star*, not the *Daily Planet*.
- The inspiration for ace reporter Lois Lane came from Lois Amster, a girl Siegel had a crush on in high school.
- The Man of Steel's physical features were based on movie star and Olympic swimmer Buster Crabbe, who starred as Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers.
- Shuster utilized a Cleveland model named Joanne Carter as his artistic inspiration for Lois Lane. After going their separate ways, the two met again and were married in 1948.

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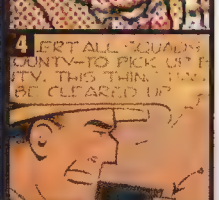
SPOTLIGHT ON...



BATMAN

He snapped necks, dropped crooks in acid and even shot people. ■ No, we're not talking about some James Cagney gangster flick. ■ Yep, Batman—who made his first appearance in 1939's *Detective Comics* #27—was no ordinary superhero. The Dark Knight relied on super-intelligence, gadgets galore, a menacing attitude and a spooky costume—everything except superpowers. He was comics' original Bad Boy, and here's how he came together.

1. SHADOW OF THE BAT Batman's shadowy stance and widespread wingspan was influenced by the 1930 film "The Bat Whispers" and horror-film star Bela Lugosi ("Dracula").

2. CAPE SIDE Batman creator Bob Kane drew his inspiration for the character from Leonardo Da Vinci's batlike flying machine the ornithopter.

3. ROGUES GALLERY The Joker? The Penguin? Catwoman? Many of Batman's enemies were inspired by comic strip detective Dick Tracy's freaked-out foes like Prune Face, Flat Top and Lips Manless.

4. BELTED Batman's utility belt with its Batarangs, gas pellets and Bat-rope stemmed from Dick Tracy's spy gadgets like his radio wristwatch.

5. LOW BLOW The Dark Knight wasn't afraid to open fire on villains in early issues, blowing away the Monk and his assistant Dala with a handgun in *Detective Comics* #32.

TRIVIA TIME

What was so shocking about *Detective Comics* #33?

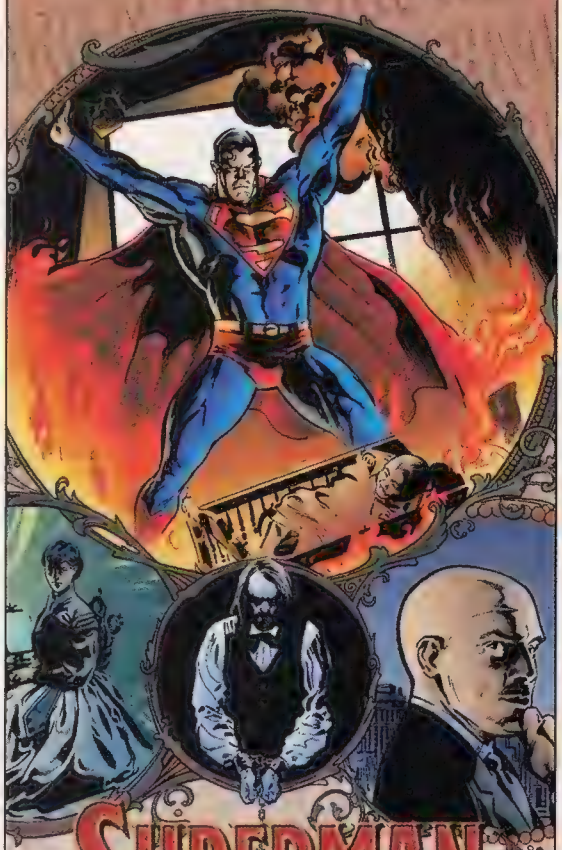
A. It featured Robin's first appearance.
B. It finally revealed Batman's origin.
C. Batman dropped a villain in a vat of acid.
D. Alfred went pantsless.

ANSWER: B

BILL FINGER

Credited with creating Batman's costume–Finger added the trademark ears and altered it from Bob Kane's design that featured a bright-red chest plate. He also wrote the first Joker story, named Gotham City and created the Golden Age Green Lantern.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS OF YESTERDAY COMES AN EVIL TO THREATEN ALL OF OUR TOMORROWS!



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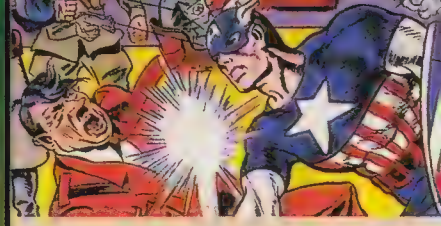
the 1940s

REALITY CHECK

The U.S. challenges Hitler and his allies in World War II. The war ends—and democracy is preserved—when the **United States drops an atom bomb on Hiroshima**...Orson Welles creates his movie classic "Citizen Kane"...Jackie Robinson breaks the color barrier in Major League Baseball...Joe Louis becomes boxing's heavyweight champion of the world.

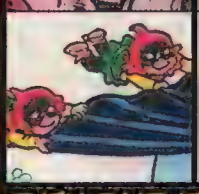


WAR GAMES

Superman sank Nazi submarines. Captain America fought the Japanese. Even Batman delivered guns to soldiers around the world. It was Us vs. Them in the '40s, and comics reflected this wartime theme. Jack Kirby and Joe Simon's Captain America emerged as our noblest hero, but every company chipped in with their own patriotic heroes, including Wonder Woman, the Fighting American and the Young Allies. No matter the company or character, the enemy remained the same: the Axis.

WHERE THE BOYS ARE

Robin and Bucky had it made. As Batman and Captain America's sidekicks, they saw it all. Action. Adventure. Danger. And they got to dress up in tights! But they also started an avalanche of sidekicks—some goofy, some downright laughable—in the 1940s. Here's a look at some of the wackiest.

	NAME	SIDEKICK TO	HIS DEAL	SAMPLE DIALOGUE	CURRENT STATUS
	SANDY, THE GOLDEN BOY	Sandman	Orphan Sandy Hawkins, nephew to the Sandman's confidante Dian Belmont, created his own costume and helped his hero on a case. Impressed, Sandman not only allowed the kid to become his sidekick, but adopted him as his ward.	"I don't like idols and legends, but when it comes to adventure and action...oh, boy!"	Now Sand, current leader of the new JSA.
	DOIBY DICKLES	The Golden Age Green Lantern	After saving Green Lantern's life, feisty, Brooklyn-accented taxi driver Doiby Dickles gained sidekick status, appearing regularly with his junked-up taxi "Goitrude" to save GL's butt in the nick of time.	"Chee! A dame in distress! Just like in the movies! Don't worry, lady–I'll save ya!"	He just popped up in *Young Justice* #16.
	WINKY, BLINKY AND NODDY	The Golden Age Flash	Clearly inspired by the Three Stooges, Winky Moylan, Blinky Boylan and Noddy Toylan (a.k.a. the Three Dimwits) were three hapless crooks who bumped into the Flash and quickly became his recurring comic-relief sidekicks.	"Wow! She must be th' Princess. All right! I don't mind keepin' an eye on a gorgeous tomato like her." –Winky	Probably dead by now. They faded off into the sunset with the end of the Golden Age.
	STRIPESY	The Star-Spangled Kid	The only adult sidekick to a kid, ex-boxer Pat Dugan joined boy millionaire Sylvester Pemberton in fighting undercover Nazi activities in America in World War II. Stripesy drove the duo around in a vehicle that also served as an airplane and boat.	"Anyone who knocks ME off my feet is beggin' to have his block knocked off!"	Now S.T.R.I.P.E., a huge robot sidekick to the new Star-Spangled Kid.
	CYCLONE TWINS	The Golden Age Red Tornado	Sisty (Ma Hunkel's daughter) and Dinky (little brother to Ma's roomer Scribbly) were big Red Tornado fans. (They didn't know Red Tornado was really Ma in disguise.) After helping RT nab some racketeers, the Twins continued on as her comic-relief sidekicks.	"Zowie! Lookit all that money! We hit the jackpot, Sisty!" –Dinky	All grown up now, the Twins are part of the "Old Justice" team, currently appearing in *Young Justice.*

THEY SAID IT...

"Basically, we were looking for a villain first, and Hitler was the villain."

–JOE SIMON on the inspiration for Captain America

HOT STUFF

JOE SIMON (TOP) **AND JACK KIRBY**
One of the greatest creative collaborations of the Golden Age, co-writers and artists Simon and Kirby invented such legendary characters as Captain America, the Newsboy Legion and Fighting American.

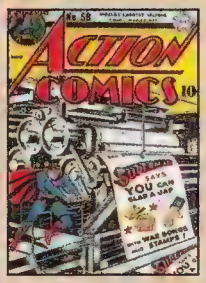
WONDER WOMAN
Created in 1941 to attract female readers to comics, the patriotic Wonder Woman's pages were filled with an unusually high number of images depicting bondage, including 75 in one issue.

THE JOKER
The Clown Prince of Crime–who killed off victims with a poison gas that left them smiling–was scheduled to die in his first appearance but was spared when editor Whitney Ellsworth found him too good to eliminate.

JOE SIMON PHOTO COURTESY JOE SIMON. JACK KIRBY PHOTO COURTESY DF MARVEL COMICS EXPLOSION PHOTO COURTESY DF AP WORLD WIDE

POLITICALLY INCORRECT

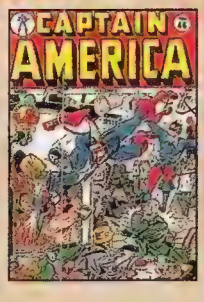
Bashing Nazi scum. ■ Slapping Japs. ■ Women cooking "Super Muffins." ■ The United States certainly was a different place in the 1940s. Outright racism was tolerated. Women were relegated to the kitchen. ■ And comics reflected these controversial and narrow-minded opinions. Just take a look.



ACTION COMICS #58

As Japanese-Americans were herded into internment camps during World War II because of their heritage, Superman told kids they could "Slap a Jap with war bonds and stamps!"

CAPTAIN AMERICA #40



Nazi atrocities rocked newspaper headlines worldwide as tales of gas chambers, human torture and deadly ovens frightened citizens. Cap fought the good fight, battling Nazis holding prisoners at gunpoint and tossing them in ovens.

SUPERMAN #31

After World War II ended, a woman's place was in the kitchen. Few women worked in the late '40s, and those who did were looked down upon by their male co-workers. Even ace reporter Lois Lane had to resort to baking "Super Muffins" to get Superman's attention.

SUPER-MERCHANDISE

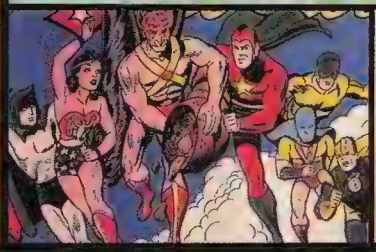
Superman's Big Red "S" might as well've been a "$" in the '40s. Fans clamored for anything related to the Man of Steel, and DC was happy to oblige. ■ Everything from cigarette lighters to movie-projecting Krypto-ray guns to wallets to belt buckles to lunch boxes sold. Superman was so immensely popular, a company—Superman, Inc.—was created just to handle licensing of the character.

TRIVIA TIME

Wonder Woman was created by William Marston, the same person who invented:

A. The lie detector
B. The lasso
C. The diesel engine
D. The push-up bra

ANSWER: A



THE JSA

Comics' first superteam turned traditional story concepts upside down, taking eight already-popular characters and merging them into a private club of crimefighters in 1940's *All-Star Comics* #3.

the 1950s

REALITY CHECK

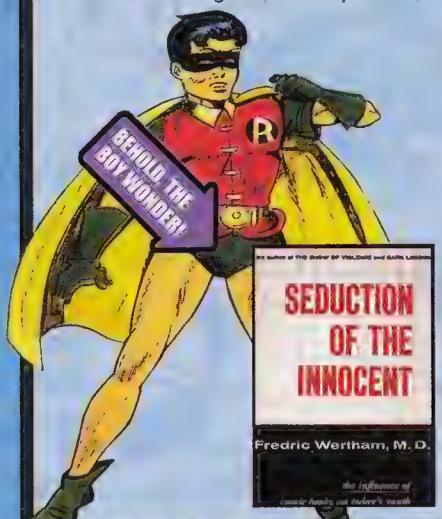
The baby boom kicks into high gear...Senator Joseph McCarthy declares war on communism and the ensuing Red Scare causes politicians, Hollywood celebrities and even neighbors to turn on each other...the Brooklyn Dodgers win a World Series...the Korean War ends...the devil's music (rock and roll), spearheaded by **Elvis Presley,** begins its assault on the airwaves, but rockers Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper are tragically killed in a plane crash.

THE MAD THINKER

Comics' most terrifying villain burst onto the scene in the 1950s. It wasn't Dr. Doom. Not Magneto. And not the Joker. It was child psychologist Fredric Wertham. His 1954 book *Seduction of the Innocent* claimed comics were innately evil and responsible for juvenile delinquency, homosexuality and communism. Wertham didn't just want the comic industry regulated, he wanted it destroyed. His reasons? Here are a few:

- Superman's defiance of the laws of physics and gravity caused children to jump off buildings.
- Robin's bare legs and "discreetly evident" genital region promoted homosexuality.
- The appearance of voluptuous female characters inspired girls to stuff their shirts.
- Crime comics excited youngsters and promoted communism.
- Romance comics steered children to prostitution.

Unbelievably, Wertham's ridiculous claims fueled an uproar, and the comics industry was in for the fight of its life.



COMICS ROT YOUR BRAIN

Comics earned massive mainstream exposure in the 1950s. Only one problem—it was nearly all negative. Spurred on by Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent*, the U.S. Senate held hearings on comics' connection to crime. The result? The Senate recommended comic publishers adopt a form of self-regulation. But Wertham's rantings and the resulting bad press had already done the damage. Comic sales plummeted to an all-time low. Comics were publicly burned. Fearing government censorship, comics publishers banded together to create the Comics Code.

CODE RED

Thanks to the new regulations in the Comics Code, horror/crime comics became completely unacceptable. Some theorize that the Comics Code Authority was created simply to put EC Comics, the #1 publisher that specialized in horror and crime books, out of business—which it virtually did. Some of the stranger standards in the code?

- **No comic could** use the word Horror, Terror or Crime in its title. Curiously, many of EC's titles carried these words.
- **Divorce** was not to be portrayed as humorous or desirable.
- **Scenes dealing with** or instruments associated with the walking dead, torture, vampires and vampirism, ghouls, cannibalism and werewolfism were prohibited.
- **Publishers could not** present detailed information instructing readers how to engage in violent actions.
- **Sexual abnormalities** were unacceptable.

With the new groundwork laid by the Code, the comics industry would have to go back to the drawing board for story concepts.

BORN AGAIN

Horror comics bled to death with the advent of the Comics Code. So DC, with its foundation of Superman and Batman titles, took advantage of the Code-weakened industry by reinventing classic heroes. Marvel, on the other hand, took a different route, cranking out big, nasty monsters that always got trounced by the forces of good. Fredric Wertham's crusade to destroy comics inadvertently sparked a new era. The Silver Age of heroes had begun.

THEY SAID IT...

"I used to hide the fact that I was in comics. We used to say we were in commercial illustration rather than admit to being comic book artists. It wasn't until the 1960s that I started telling people how proud I was of my comics industry."

—JOHN ROMITA SR., on drawing comics in the 1950s

GENRE BENDERS

With horror and crime comics dead in the water, the 1950s saw an explosion of other genres. From comics based on Bob Hope to God, diversity ruled.

MUSICALS Stan Lee's illustrated lyric guide to the 1950s most popular songs was an experiment lasting exactly one issue.

CELEBRITIES Hoping to boost sales, companies put out books on popular actors. Bob Hope's, surprisingly, lasted 18 years.

WAR With the Korean War raging, DC created three war titles, introducing Sgt. Rock from artist and returning war vet Joe Kubert.

SCIENCE FICTION With film star Flash Gordon captivating viewers, comics turned to sci-fi like *Speed Carter: Spaceman.*

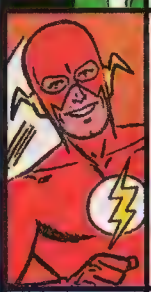
SENATE HEARING PHOTO COURTESY OF WIDE WORLD PHOTO. PRESLEY PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

NEW AGE HEROES

With a little spit and polish, DC's superheroes stood ready for the Silver Age. Costumes and origins were updated. Some characters like Green Lantern and Flash were overhauled; others like Green Arrow and Wonder Woman were fine tuned. Either way, the Silver Age looked sterling.

SILVER AGE | **GOLDEN AGE**

NAME: Green Lantern
ALIAS: Hal Jordan
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Showcase* #22
SILVER AGE DEAL: A slick flyboy who could handle anything wood, this GL was powerless against anything yellow.
CURRENT STATUS: He went nuts, killed some folks, came to his senses, saved the world, then died. Now he's been reincarnated as the human conduit of the Spectre.



NAME: The Flash
ALIAS: Barry Allen
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Showcase* #4
SILVER AGE DEAL: A police forensics scientist in his secret identity, Allen sported a mask instead of a pie plate on his head.
CURRENT STATUS: He retired to the 30th century, and then sacrificed himself to save the universe in 1986's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* mini-series. And get this–he's still dead.

NAME: Green Arrow
ALIAS: Oliver Queen
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Adventure Comics* #250
SILVER AGE DEAL: Losing the Arrowcar, this Queen was a wealthy playboy, not a plunderer of Indian artifacts.
CURRENT STATUS: Ollie was blown to bits in *Green Arrow* (vol.3) #101 and was recently resurrected.

NAME: Wonder Woman
ALIAS: Diana Prince
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Wonder Woman* #105
SILVER AGE DEAL: Diana ditched her lasso and bracelets for tighter shorts.
CURRENT STATUS: The Silver Age Wonder Woman was reduced to clay at the end of *Crisis* and reintroduced as an all-new character in 1987.

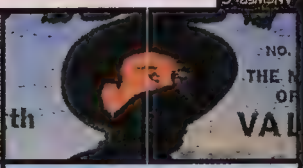
TRIVIA TIME

What modern-day Justice Leaguer made his first appearance in 1955?

A. The Atom
B. Flash
C. Martian Manhunter
D. Confuso the what-the-hell-is-going-on-with-Grant-Morrison's-stories Wonder Kid

ANSWER: C

RELIGION Eager for new concepts but Code wary, Marvel turned to God. Prayers went unanswered and *Bible Tales* failed.



WESTERN Children idolized Western heroes like the Lone Ranger, and titles such as *Black Rider* tried to rope in readers.

IN DECEMBER

a tale told by fire light

STORY & ART BY
RICHARD PACE
COVER BY DALE KEOWN

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the 1960s

REALITY CHECK

Sex, drugs, and rock and roll are the orders of the day as the free love and hippie movement swells nationwide...the Woodstock concert parties on in upstate New York...the Vietnam War tears the country apart...**Neil Armstrong lands on the moon**...the battle for civil rights rages...J.F.K., Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X all get assassinated...Roger Maris breaks Babe Ruth's single-season home run record with 61 roundtrippers...Marilyn Monroe overdoses, dying at age 36...the Beatles invade America to hordes of screaming girls.

THE MARVEL AGE

Reed Richards talked too much. ■ Sue Storm exuded class and dignity. ■ Johnny Storm craved fast cars and beautiful women. ■ Ben Grimm griped and whined incessantly. ■ Together, this team of oh-so-real superheroes known as the Fantastic Four revolutionized comics, as Stan Lee and Jack Kirby introduced the world to heroes with amazing powers and very real problems with *FF #1* in 1961. Comic storytelling would never be the same again, leading to the creation of Spider-Man, the Avengers and the X-Men, among many other core Marvel Heroes. ■ The Fantastic Four may have been adventurers, but they were a family first, warts and all. Their adventures took them clear across the cosmos, but readers always cared more about the Torch giving the Thing a hot foot back at the ol' Baxter Building. A healthy dose of realism and a touch of the fantastic. That was the Marvel way.

FOUR SCORES ...and family picnics would never be the same again.

MARVEL'S DYNAMIC DUO

Longtime Marvel artist John Romita Sr. on the two cornerstones of the Marvel Universe: STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY

"I'd ride in the car sometimes when they'd plot issues of *Fantastic Four*. They thought in very different ways. Jack always wanted to shoot the works, and Stan wanted to stretch out a story. It seemed Stan was always trying to moderate Jack's inclination to rush stories and introduce a hundred new characters on every page. Jack always had that energy busting at the seams, and Stan knew how to harness that into what the readers wanted. Jack played at fantasy, and Stan would always make it somehow believable.

"They argued. Neither would seemingly want to incorporate the others' suggestions–ever. They rarely agreed, but they always allowed themselves the illusion of agreement.

"They were both brilliant, but on different planes. Both brought tremendous amounts of different kinds of energy to the total picture. And the record shows that the readers loved their work. I learned quite a lot on those rides."

THEY SAID IT...

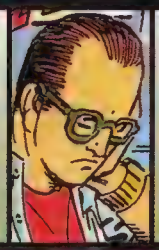
"I could tell by the fan mail. I could tell by the tone the kids used when they wrote. They loved the stories, they loved the characters. The audience—those kids—never lie. You didn't have to be a genius to figure it out."

–STAN LEE, on how he knew Marvel had surpassed DC as industry leader

HOT STUFF

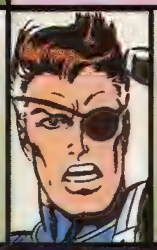
GARDNER FOX

Fox returned to his *Justice Society of America* roots to launch a revised Hawkman (left) and a new *Justice League of America*, complete with Green Lantern, Flash, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Martian Manhunter and an annoying sidekick named Snapper Carr.



STEVE DITKO

The intensely private Ditko emerged as the guiding force behind Spidey's look and sensitive demeanor, serving as artist and co-plotter, teaming with Stan Lee from 1962-66.



JIM STERANKO

Writer/artist Steranko wowed readers with his progressive approach to comic visuals, arranging panels in an unusual manner, supervising his own colors and including a psychedelic "pop art" style on *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*

SPIDEY SECRETS

He struggled to pay his bills. He peppered his punches with punch lines. And he agonized over every decision, from who to date to who to work for. Spider-Man was the lovable "Everyman" superhero, trying to balance superpowers with an ordinary life. But was that life so ordinary? Betcha didn't know these Spidey secrets.

LITTLE-KNOWN SPIDER-MAN FACTS

- The first Spider-Man story almost didn't make it into print because publisher Martin Goodman thought readers would find spiders distasteful.
- Spider-Man co-creator Stan Lee claims the inspiration for Spider-Man came from the Spider, a 1930s-era, pulp-fiction vigilante.
- Before Spidey's debut in *Amazing Fantasy* #15, Lee gave Jack Kirby a six-page tryout for Spider-Man. Lee felt Kirby's Spidey wasn't quite what he wanted and turned Spidey over to Ditko. Ditko started handling the bulk of the plotting as *Amazing Spider-Man* progressed.
- In the Ditko issues, the artist didn't draw the "speed lines" and sound effects. Lee would add them, as he admitted in his first Spidey *Marvel Masterworks* intro, allegedly to Ditko's dismay.
- Ditko's replacement, John Romita Sr., used to discuss Spidey stories with his son–current *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* artist John Jr.–who created the Prowler for his father when he was 11.
- Mary Jane Watson was introduced as a neighbor's niece that Aunt May wanted to introduce Peter Parker to in 1964, but it was two years before Watson was actually shown. She was designed by Romita Sr.
- Every Spidey writer from 1962-78–Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, Gerry Conway, Len Wein and Marv Wolfman–eventually rose to become Marvel's editor-in-chief. Denny O'Neil broke the chain, but eventually ascended to the lofty position of DC Group Editor.

ARMSTRONG PHOTO COURTESY OF AP PHOTO/NEIL ARMSTRONG NASA; MCADAM AND BOOND PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION; NEAL ADAMS PHOTO COURTESY OF DC

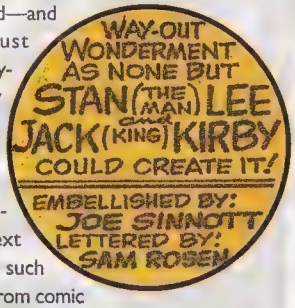
BAT CAMP

Batman went West and everything else went south. While the Adam West-starring "Batman" rocked network television with sky-high ratings, the show's campy nature branded the comics industry as one big joke. Unfortunately, some of those memories never died. Was "Batman" ultimately good or bad for comics? Take a look:

THE GOOD	THE BAD
Julie Newmar (Catwoman) in skintight cat outfit	Victor Buono (King Tut) bustin' out of his robes
Dance numbers with scantily clad extras	The Bat-tusi
Robin shouting "Turbines to speed!"	Robin shouting "Holy hole in a donut!"
The Batarang	Bat-shark Repellent
Batman rides sleek Batboat	Batman rides a surfboard
Alfred, master of disguise	Aunt Harriet, master of dead weight

BULLPEN BULLETINS

The King. Stan the Man. Jazzy John. Marvel Comics made its creators stars. "I wanted to give people credit," founder Stan Lee says. "Before Marvel, creators rarely got their names in the strips." Marvel made sure everyone down to letterers and colorists got mentioned—and remembered. "Nicknames just seemed friendly," Lee says. "Everyone could remember 'King' Kirby or 'Jazzy John' Romita." Marvel's light style and hip "Bullpen Bulletin" pages led to the growth of comic book fandom and provided the company with its next generation of stars. In fact, one such fan, Roy Thomas, made the leap from comic fan to Marvel employee to eventual editor-in-chief.



TRIVIA TIME

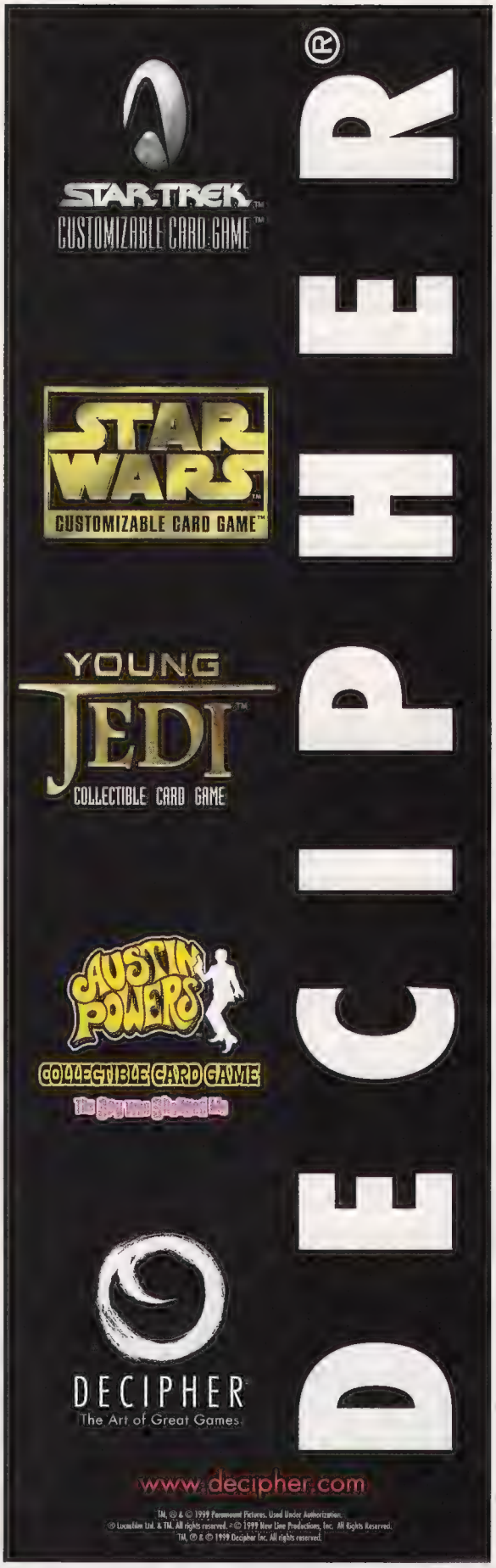
The only minority stereotype missing from Marvel's *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos* was:

A. Snooty British boy
B. Country Bumpkin
C. Tough-as-nails but sensitive Brooklynite
D. Turban-headed convenience store guy

ANSWER: D

NEAL ADAMS

Artist Adams injected a fresh dose of realism into comics art (Ex.: His character's hair actually blew in the wind), experimented with page layout and returned Batman to his darker roots on *The Brave and the Bold* and *Detective Comics* in the late '60s.



the 1970s

REALITY CHECK

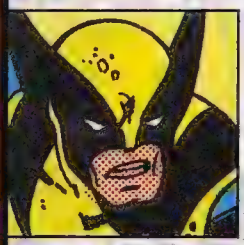
The National Guard kills four students at Kent State during a protest against the Vietnam Conflict...Alabama Gov. George Wallace is shot during his presidential campaign... President Richard Nixon resigns from office in '74 after pleading, "I am not a crook!"...Hank Aaron hits his 715th home run, breaking Babe Ruth's all-time career record...**American troops pull out of Vietnam**..."Star Wars" steamrolls box-office records while "Jaws" chases moviegoers out of the water...nuclear disaster strikes Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island...the United States celebrates its bicentennial in '76...Elvis Presley dies. No, really.

THE BE-ALL, END-ALL

"Dark Phoenix Saga." ■ Bullseye versus Elektra. ■ Tony Stark's alcoholism. ■ Ring any bells? Each represents three classic stories from three defining creative runs that began in the 1970s. Don't believe us? Take a peek at what every creator since has aspired to.

X-MEN

WHO: Chris Claremont and John Byrne
WHEN: *Uncanny X-Men* #108 (1977)–#143 (1980)
WHY: The X-Men have topped the sales charts for 20 years. These guys first put 'em there. From "Dark Phoenix Saga" to "Days of Future Past" to the creation of Alpha Flight, they all came from the co-plotting writer/artist collaboration of Claremont and Byrne. And that's leaving out other concoctions like Kitty Pryde, the Hellfire Club, Proteus and Mystique.



DID YOU KNOW: Jean Grey was originally scheduled to live at the end of the "Dark Phoenix Saga," but then-Marvel Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter felt she needed to be punished for her cosmic atrocities. Claremont and Byrne settled on killing her.

DAREDEVIL

WHO: Frank Miller
WHEN: *Daredevil* #158 (1979)–#191 (1982)
WHY: Miller injected a high-energy art style that really shifted into high gear when he took the writing reins from Roger McKenzie with *Daredevil* #168. He, along with inker/colorist Klaus Janson perfectly complementing Miller's storytelling, introduced Elektra as DD's former-lover-turned-assassin and transformed the Kingpin and Bullseye from two-bit villains into lethal adversaries.

DID YOU KNOW: Miller–who once compared Daredevil to Sam Spade, a crime detective popular in novels and films in the 1930s and '40s–admitted that he swiped the idea for Elektra from a story in Will Eisner's *The Spirit* entitled "Sand Saref," about an ex-girlfriend who returns as a villain.

IRON MAN

WHO: David Michelinie and Bob Layton
WHEN: *Iron Man* #116 (1978)–#157 (1982)
WHY: Tony Stark's battle with the bottle began here. Writer Michelinie and co-plotter/inker Layton's riveting take on the Armored Avenger and his alcoholism–aided and abetted by penciler John Romita Jr. for half of their run–chipped away at Tony's playboy-industrialist m.o. and made him utterly believable, a truly Iron *Man*.

DID YOU KNOW: Michelinie feels that if he had to do the Iron Man storyline today, he would change Stark's alcohol addiction to cocaine. Eventually, Michelinie states, the cocaine wouldn't be enough, and Stark would commit his vast resources and intelligence to creating a more powerful designer drug.

THEY SAID IT...

"It was superheroes questioning themselves for the first time. It wasn't a bad thing to do."
—DENNY O'NEIL, on writing *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*

SUPER SUCCESS

Superman soared. ■ The first major blockbuster based on a comic book flew into theaters in 1978. And it took off faster than...well, okay, faster than a speeding bullet. "Superman: The Movie" had it all: awesome special effects, an amazing cast that included Oscar winners Gene Hackman and Marlon Brando, and a script by *Godfather* author Mario Puzo that portrayed the Man of Steel as heroic, not hokey. ■ Raking in a then-titanic $82.8 million, the movie spawned three sequels and primed mainstream America for future comic-based films like "Batman" and "Blade." But it didn't just influence Hollywood. Superman comics jumped off shelves. Comic sales increased nationwide, leading to the 1980s resurgence in comic readers.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Sex, drugs and racial slurs. ■ Comics took a stance on real-world social issues in the '70s, mirroring problems corrupting the country. Heroes like Green Lantern and Green Arrow dealt with prejudice and drug abuse, stunned by the realization that GA's sidekick Speedy became hooked on heroin.

And in *Amazing Spider-Man*, Peter Parker faced best friend Harry Osborn's addiction to LSD. ■ Yep, drug abuse, for once, wasn't just glossed over—it was right on the cover.

DON'T CALL ME CHIEF!

It's tough to be the king. Just ask any one of the seven, yes, SEVEN, Marvel editors-in-chief from the '70s. Yep, Marvel went through head honchos like Aunt May's wheatcakes went through Uncle Petey Parker.

STAN LEE
December 1953-April 1973

ROY THOMAS
April 1973-October 1974

LEN WEIN
October 1974-June 1975

MARV WOLFMAN
June 1975-June 1976

GERRY CONWAY
June 1976-July 1976

SUPERMAN PHOTO COURTESY OF: EVERETT COLLECTION; ALL OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT. SAGON PHOTO COURTESY OF AP PHOTO/RICK BERNICA.

BLACK POWER!

Ten easy steps for making a genuine stereotypical, borderline-offensive, 1970s black superhero.

1. BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL! Make them black. Seems obvious, but nobody included that on the memo for "Blackhawk," and look where that went.

2. ALWAYS BET ON BLACK The character MUST be called "black" something, like Black Goliath, Black Lightning, Black Panther, etc., to offset how all the white heroes' names start with "white," like…uh…

3. DRESS FOR SUCCESS When designing the costume, pepper freely with high collars, plunging V-necks and chains. And the afro's a must.

4. TALK THE TALK Aside from a healthy dose of "jive turkey" and "brotha," give your new crimefighter a believable ethnic catch phrase, like "Sweet Christmas."

5. WALK THE WALK Make 'em good and angry, so they'll lash out at billboards and fences and stuff when they're talking to themselves.

6. UP WITH PEOPLE Unlike guys like Superman and Aquaman, they're one of the people. Have the grocer give him an apple when he walks by.

7. STAY GOLDEN He might act all tough and grouchy, but beneath that hairy, V-necked chest beats a heart of gold. Unless The Man gets in his way, that is.

8. DO THE TIME Give him a criminal background, just like Superma…uh, no, like-Batma…er, no, bad example. Like Iron M–ah, maybe we should move on to #9.

9. SLUM IT UP These guys are rarely members of the Avengers or JLA. They're more likely private investigators, ex-thugs for hire, social workers, stuff like that.

10. FUBU The stories have to have the air of authenticity to them: the situations the characters find themselves in because of who they are, their day-to-day problems and the struggles they must bear. You need somebody who can relate to these issues. Get somebody white to write it.

HOT CHOCOLATE 6'1" of Afro-sheened fury, Black Lightning is black and can shoot lightning.

TRIVIA TIME

What comic did Howard the Duck make his comic debut in?

A. *Howard the Duck* #1
B. *Giant-Size Man-Thing* #4
C. *Marvel Comics Super Special: KISS*
D. *The Future Failed George Lucas Projects Commandos* #6

ANSWER: B

ARCHIE GOODWIN
July 1976-January 1978

JIM SHOOTER
January 1978-February 1987

the 1980s

REALITY CHECK

People wonder who shot J.R. on the television hit "Dallas"...underdog U.S. hockey team nets Olympic gold in Lake Placid...actor Ronald Reagan elected president...Mark David Chapman shoots and kills John Lennon outside his Dakota apartment in New York City...52 American hostages are freed from Iran after 444 days of captivity...Pete Rose breaks Ty Cobb's all-time record of 4,192 career hits...**NASA's Challenger space shuttle explodes, killing seven**...Tim Burton's gothic film "Batman" rakes in $250 million as 1989's top grossing picture.

1986: COMICS GREATEST YEAR?

If you could pinpoint comics' greatest year, you'd be hard pressed to beat 1986. Both Marvel and DC were knocking everything outta the park, as fan interest exploded and outside media finally started taking notice of comics again. Don't believe us? Just check out this hit list:

◄ ***Watchmen***–Alan Moore's award-winning tale of a realistic world where superheroes are outlawed.

• ***Batman: Year One***–Frank Miller on Batman, exploring the Dark Knight's rookie year taking on Gotham City corruption.

• ***Shadow* mini-series**–Howard Chaykin's grim 'n' gritty take on the Shadow introduced comics to hyper-violence, with a midget stuffed into a water cooler.

• ***Legends***–This DC crossover launched a new JLA, Captain Marvel, Suicide Squad and the Flash.

• ***Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*** ►
Frank Miller's futuristic take on an older Batman forced out of retirement. Magazines like *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* raved about this "hip" new series.

• **Marvel's 25th Anniversary**–The House of Ideas celebrates with a month-long cover theme and a jam issue of *Fantastic Four*, featuring Stan Lee, Jim Shooter and many others in an anniversary-style story culminating with the FF reuniting.

• **X-Men's "Mutant Massacre"**–This major X-story killed off countless mutants and mutilated Angel's wings, leading to his dark transformation to Archangel.

• ***X-Factor***–This new X-book resurrected Jean Grey and reunited the original five X-Men on one team.

• ***Daredevil's* "Born Again"**–Frank Miller gives Daredevil's secret identity to his enemy the Kingpin, shattering DD's status quo in seven gripping issues.

• ***Maus***–Art Spiegelman's gripping story about the Holocaust as told in comic format, with Jews as mice and Nazis as cats, earned new respect for the medium and a special Pulitzer Prize awarded in the '90s.

◄ ***The Man of Steel***–John Byrne's classic relaunch of Superman redefined and rejuvenated the then-47-year-old hero with scaled-down powers and (with co-conspirator Marv Wolfman) a more menacing Lex Luthor.

THEY SAID IT...

"Superhero comics are simple answers to very complex problems, and in real life there aren't such simple and cheerful answers, and that's what *Watchmen* is about in some respects."

–ALAN MOORE, on the legendary *Watchmen* series

HOT STUFF

JOHN BYRNE
After splitting with long-time *X-Men* collaborator Chris Claremont, Byrne went solo–literally. He retooled *Fantastic Four* and rebooted Superman as a one-man show–writing, penciling and inking–inspiring numerous artists to take over writing chores as well.

MARV WOLFMAN (BOTTOM) **AND GEORGE PÉREZ**
The writer/artist team not only gave the *X-Men* a run for its money with *The New Teen Titans*, but they literally revised the entire DC Universe with the 12-issue *Crisis on Infinite Earths* mini-series.

SANDMAN
Writer Neil Gaiman–influenced by fellow Brit Alan Moore–elevated comics to a more "mature" level with his literary title, helping pave the way for DC's "mature reader" Vertigo line.

THE NEW STYLE

The '80s gave us "Miami Vice" and Flock of Seagulls haircuts. But they also gave comics more trends than you can shake a gamma-irradiated control rod at. Just take a look.

Origin: *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen* provided glimpses of grizzled heroes. Suddenly, every comic and *every* character had to get tuff.
Bastard Offspring: *The Punisher, Green Arrow: The Longbow Hunters, Hawkworld*–and even the whimsical Spider-Man grimmed up in the "Kraven's Last Hunt" storyline.

Origin: Marvel rolled out the 12-issue *Secret Wars* and DC countered with a dozen issues of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, both starring the company's biggest characters and tying into issues of the regular monthly books.
Bastard Offspring: Marvel's *Secret Wars II* and DC's *Legends* were just the tip o' the iceberg. Nowadays, DC puts out a "mega-crossover" *every* year.

Origin: Although Jean Grey died in a touching, classic moment in *Uncanny X-Men* #137 (Sep. 1980), she was revived in 1986 when Marvel needed her to star in *X-Factor*. With that, death in comics was no longer The End.
Bastard Offspring: Hal Jordan, Spidey's Aunt May, Reed Richards, Dr. Doom, Superman and Norman Osborn all "died" yet miraculously returned to the living.

Origin: Old title ain't working? Throw away existing continuity and start from scratch! Writer/artist John Byrne made revamp history in 1986's *Man of Steel* mini-series.
Bastard Offspring: Hawkman, Wonder Woman and Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) all got the "reboot" treatment, and even Spider-Man underwent the revamp knife in Byrne's recent *Spider-Man: Chapter One*.

CHALLENGER PHOTO COURTESY OF JAP PHOTO/NASA. BYRNE PHOTO COURTESY OF MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT. PÉREZ AND WOLFMAN PHOTO BY AL QUIROLA. MOORE PHOTO BY MITCH JENKINS

DRESSED TO IMPRESS

Marvel developed a fashion sense during the '80s. ■ Tired of the same old look for most of its core characters, the House of Ideas began changing many of its heroes' fighting togs. ■ Sales may have climbed, but imagine the dry-cleaning bill!

1. WOLVERINE

First Appearance: *Uncanny X-Men* #139 (Nov. 1980)

The Deal: Then-penciler John Byrne ditched Logan's original blue-and-yellows (which he currently wears again) for a brownish ensemble.

2. SPIDER-MAN

First Appearance: *Amazing Spider-Man* #252 (May 1984)

The Deal: His original outfit destroyed, Web-head used an alien costume-maker to create an all-black costume. It later turned out to be the alien symbiote that became Venom!

3. INCREDIBLE HULK

First Appearance: *Incredible Hulk* #324 (Oct. 1986)

The Deal: In an effort to cure the Hulk, Doc Samson accidentally turned the Jade Giant gray. It made him more intelligent, and he became a Las Vegas bouncer named Mr. Fixit.

4. CAPTAIN AMERICA

First Appearance: *Captain America* #337 (Jan. 1988)

The Deal: The government–claiming it created the name, shield and idea of Captain America–ordered Cap to become its operative. Claiming to represent the American people, Cap resigned his post and took on the new identity of the Captain.

5. IRON MAN

First Appearance: *Iron Man* #200 (Nov. 1985)

The Deal: After losing his company to archenemy Obadiah Stane, Tony Stark donned a new red-and-silver suit of armor and cleaned Stane's clock.

6. THOR

First Appearance: *Thor* #378 (April 1987)

The Deal: Cursed by Hela the Death Goddess, Thor could no longer die, but his injuries would never heal. The solution? Grow a beard to cover his scarred face, and wear a suit of chainmail armor to protect his battered body.

TRIVIA TIME

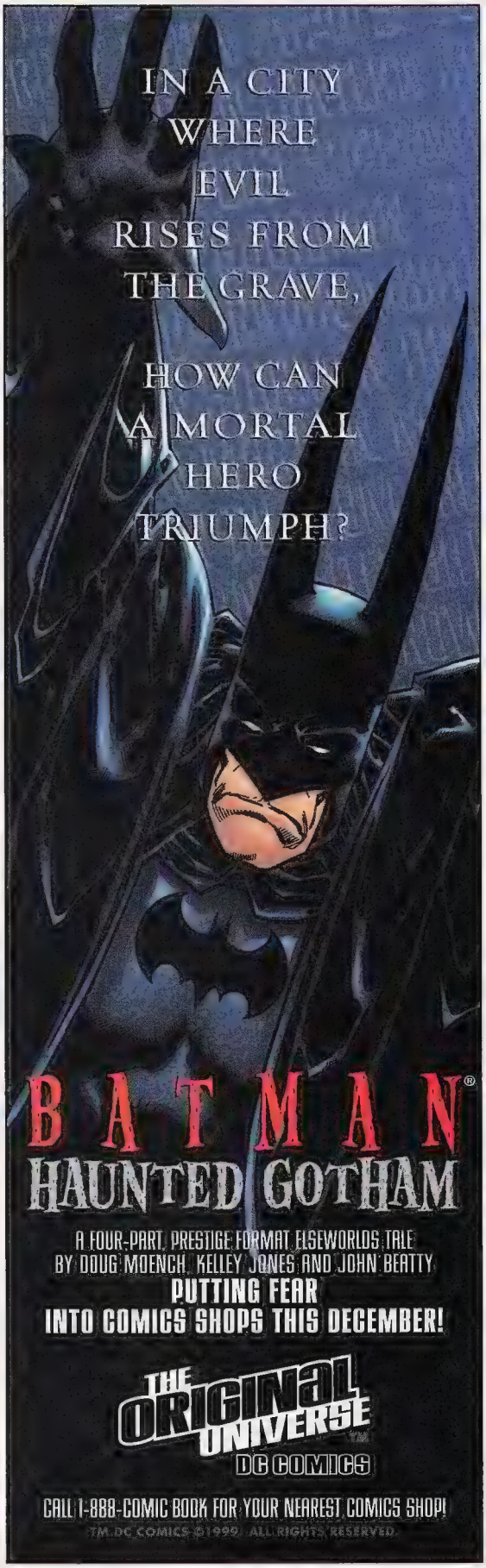
Which DC mini-series was so damn bad it got canceled before it could end?

A. *Sonic Disruptors*
B. *Camelot 3000*
C. *Jemm, Son of Saturn*
D. *Kiss Your Continuity Good-bye*

ANSWER: A

ALAN MOORE

Moore rocked comics by breathing life into a stale character, turning *Swamp Thing* into a modern-horror giant. He then teamed with Dave Gibbons on the groundbreaking mini-series *Watchmen*, taking DC's recently purchased Charlton Comics characters (Blue Beetle, Captain Atom, the Question) and spinning a twisted take on superheroes.



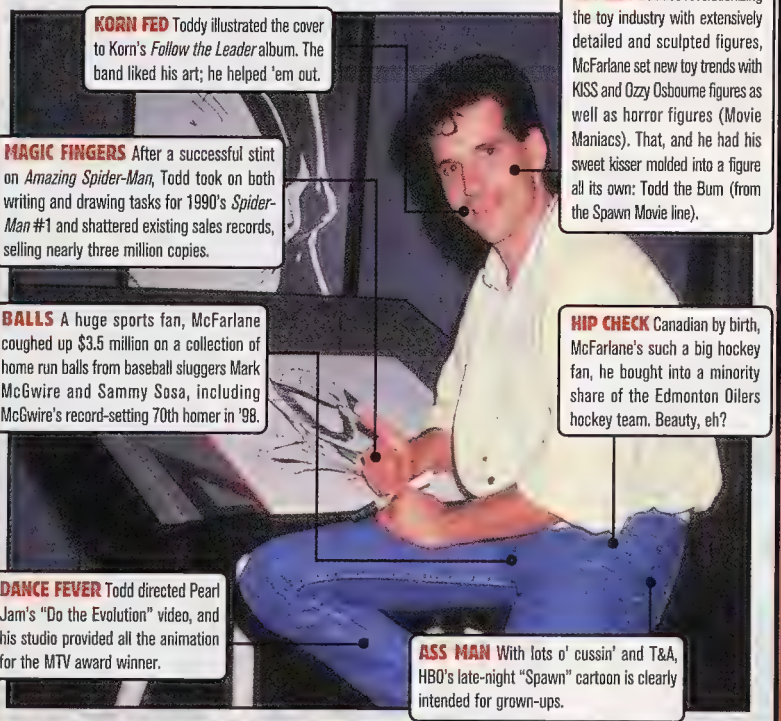
the 1990s

REALITY CHECK

Rodney King's violent assault by police caught on video shocks the nation...Johnny Carson ends 30-year run as host of "The Tonight Show"...the U.S. battles Iraq in Operation Desert Storm...**Police chase O.J. Simpson's white Bronco through Los Angeles; Simpson is eventually acquitted of murdering his ex-wife**...James Cameron's $200-million-budgeted film "Titanic" rakes in $601 million domestically and wins eight Oscars...President Clinton is impeached after having sexual relations with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

MEGA MAN

Artists stepped out from behind the panels in the '90s. When seven artists from Marvel Comics formed Image Comics in 1992, it paved the way for creator ownership to explode as top-notch talent like J. Scott Campbell, Joe Madureira and Chris Bachalo jumped off big-name projects to create their own works. Now superstar artists can set their own hours, work outside o' comics and make some mega-star bucks. King of 'em all? That's easy. *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane's turned his success into a multimillion-dollar empire. Just take a look:



KORN FED Toddy illustrated the cover to Korn's *Follow the Leader* album. The band liked his art; he helped 'em out.

MAGIC FINGERS After a successful stint on *Amazing Spider-Man*, Todd took on both writing and drawing tasks for 1990's *Spider-Man* #1 and shattered existing sales records, selling nearly three million copies.

BALLS A huge sports fan, McFarlane coughed up $3.5 million on a collection of home run balls from baseball sluggers Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa, including McGwire's record-setting 70th homer in '98.

DANCE FEVER Todd directed Pearl Jam's "Do the Evolution" video, and his studio provided all the animation for the MTV award winner.

TOY BOY Besides revolutionizing the toy industry with extensively detailed and sculpted figures, McFarlane set new toy trends with KISS and Ozzy Osbourne figures as well as horror figures (Movie Maniacs). That, and he had his sweet kisser molded into a figure all its own: Todd the Bum (from the Spawn Movie line).

HIP CHECK Canadian by birth, McFarlane's such a big hockey fan, he bought into a minority share of the Edmonton Oilers hockey team. Beauty, eh?

ASS MAN With lots o' cussin' and T&A, HBO's late-night "Spawn" cartoon is clearly intended for grown-ups.

THEY SAID IT...

"I look at the X-Men and I think, this is my entire working life, and it's taken [Marvel] 18 months to gut it like a fish."
–CHRIS CLAREMONT, on his acrimonious 1991 departure from the X-Men. (P.S. He's back on the book.)

HOT STUFF

ALEX ROSS
Ross' realistic painting style gave comics a much-needed renaissance with 1994's *Marvels*, a look at Marvel's heroes and villains through the eyes of ordinary people, and *Kingdom Come*, a desolate glimpse into the DC future.

KEVIN SMITH
The "Clerks," "Mallrats" and "Chasing Amy" director linked the mainstream and comics industry when he took over the writing reins of Marvel's *Daredevil*. He also perpetuated his comic geekiness by naming his baby daughter Harley Quinn (after the animated "Batman" villain).

ANIMATED BATMAN
Producers Paul Dini and Bruce Timm reinvented superhero cartoons, returning Batman to his dark roots with the wildly popular "Batman: The Animated Series," and then reinvented him again with the futuristic "Batman Beyond."

6

BUYERS BEWARE!

Ever tie a blanket around your neck, playing Superman? Or grab a garbage-can lid, pretending to be Captain America? Sure you have. But in the 1990s, playtime became more of a reality, as comic merchandising jumped to the next level, giving fans more than just T-shirts and hats of their favorite characters. Here's a look at 10 of the most unbelievable holy-crap-we-can't-believe-they-actually-made-this-stuff merchandise.

TOP 10 COOLEST COMIC-MERCHANDISE ITEMS

1. Kryptonite replica, to defeat your very own Kryptonian **(DC)**
2. A real (unfortunately non-working) Green Lantern Ring **(DC)**
3. Life-size Wolverine claws pen set, where each claw is a removable, working pen **(Creative Licenses)**
4. The Key to Hell from *The Sandman*–unfortunately, it won't fit on any key chain **(DC)**
5. Spider-Man Guitar to play your favorite Britney Spears song on **(Gibson)**
6. Life-size Batarang to toss at your kid brother **(DC)**
7. Bat-pole-activating Shakespeare bust from "Batman" TV show **(Majic Productions)**
8. Replica of the Flash's ring, for those quick costume changes **(DC)**
9. Sandman Bookends to prop your favorite trade paperbacks between Neil Gaiman's two Sandman incarnations **(DC)**
10. Thor Statue, based on the kick-ass John Romita Jr. art from the cover to *Wizard* #80 **(Bowen Designs)**

10 2

W-FROM LEFT: PHOTO BY ALAN WILTSHIRE; SHAPING PHOTO COURTESY OF AP PHOTO; LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT; ROSS AND SMITH PHOTO BY PAUL SCHEALER; SHOOTER PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

They were loud. ■ Brash. Talented. And angry. Damn angry. ■ When seven superstar artists bolted Marvel Comics in 1992 for the greener—and uncharted—pastures of start-up Image Comics, they were ready to take on the world. ■ The Magnificent Seven—Erik Larsen, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Whilce Portacio, Marc Silvestri and Jim Valentino—represented a new breed of creators tapping their talents to fight the Man. And the comics industry hated them for it. ■ But not the fans—they poured out in droves, even when the actual comics didn't appear. It was almost like a soap opera. See if you can match the event to the correct Image grandpappy.

1. Erik Larsen
2. Rob Liefeld
3. Todd McFarlane
4. Marc Silvestri
5. Jim Valentino
6. Jim Lee
7. Whilce Portacio

A. Had a $125,000 spaceship built as a convention attraction. It proved too heavy to ship and was subsequently used only three times.
B. Owns a bustier once worn by Madonna. Claims he's never sniffed it.
C. Actually drew a Ferrari into a comic, hoping for a product placement deal…and a free Ferrari. Yeah, right.
D. Lost all his possessions in a house fire, including an extensive comic and original art collection.
E. After failing to publish a comic for *over a year*, he suddenly re-emerged as Image's publisher.
F. Credited the creation of the name for his company on a drunken evening. He nearly reconsidered the next day when he sobered up.
G. His first Image book was late by a mere 21 months.

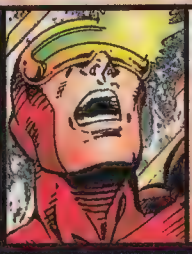
ANSWERS: 1-D; 2-A; 3-B; 4-F; 5-E; 6-C; 7-G

TRIVIA TIME

Inter-company crossover mania hit rock bottom when Marvel's grim-and-gritty Punisher teamed up with which wholesome, all-American comic icon?

A. Mickey Mouse
B. Garfield
C. Archie
D. Hugh Hefner

ANSWER: C



JIM SHOOTER

Former Marvel Editor-In-Chief Shooter built Valiant into a formidable opponent of Marvel, DC and Image in the early '90s. Eventually ousted as editor, Shooter was involved in two subsequent failed comic ventures. He recently returned to Valiant–now Acclaim Comics–to revamp the characters (like Solar, left) he initially revived eight years ago.

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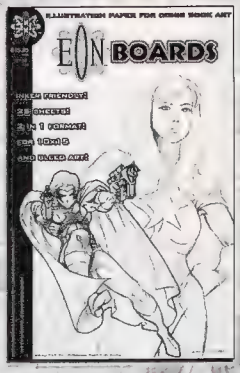

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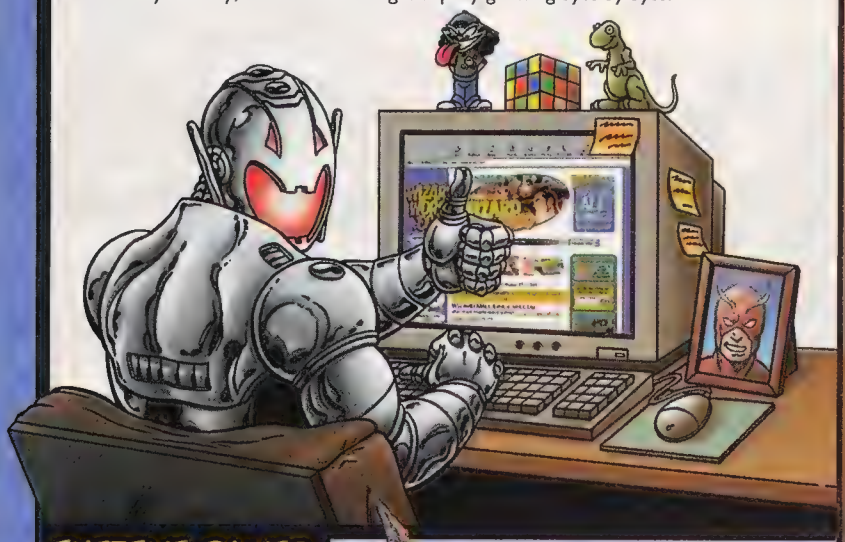
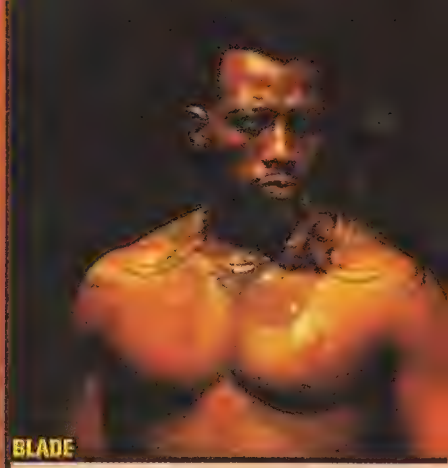
CYBER SALE

It's tough to curl up with a good computer. ■ For that reason alone, "online comics" have yet to click. Sure, Stan Lee Media gears up for an online comics boom, and we hope they hit a home run. But for now, the Internet's main comics contribution is revolutionizing sales. Live in the Idaho mountains? Not to worry—ordering new books is just a mouse click away. ■ And with fanboy-to-fanboy selling through auction sites like eBay.com, collectors can sell their own comics right from home. The future of online *comics* may be hazy, but online trading is rapidly growing byte by byte.



EXTREME GAMES

Lara Croft opened the door. Now *Final Fantasy VIII*, *Resident Evil* and *Metal Gear Solid* are ready to kick it in. ■ Croft—the sexy, spelunking *Tomb Raider* star—has exploded onto the comics realm with a 150,000-seller from Top Cow. And there's more. A mini-comic will be inserted in versions of the new *TR4* video game, and chains like Electronics Boutique will be selling the comic. The next comic trend for the 2000s? Video games. And there're plenty to mine from: the action/adventure, monster-filled *Final Fantasy VIII*, the zombie shoot-'em-up *Resident Evil* and super-spy *Metal Gear Solid*. Trust us. In the 2000s, video game characters will be invading your home... four-color style.



BLADE

BIG WAVES

Besides plugging in to the online and video game scene, the 2000s will see some other major movements for comics. Here's a quick rundown:

• **MORE MOVIES** Marvel's recent Wesley Snipes-starring "Blade" helped pave the way for Bryan Singer's big-budget "X-Men" flick. Look for the mutants to clear a movie path for "Spider-Man," the long-delayed "Superman" and even another shot at "Batman."

• **BIG SHOTS** Hollywood screenwriters Bob Gale and Kevin Smith. Crime novelist Greg Rucka. TV creator J. Michael Straczynski. They've all crossed over from mainstream media into comics. While that trend continues, look for more comic stars (like Todd McFarlane) to step into the mainstream on movies, video games, music videos and more.

• **MANGA MANIA** Think *Battle Chasers* and *Darkminds* have shoved manga on America? Barely. But as Pokémon's proven, America's willing to embrace manga and anime more than ever before. It's just a matter of time before manga permeates comics on a major level.

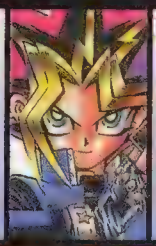
• **AND MORE** Well, as volatile as the past seven decades have been, look for the 2000s to change the face of comics again. With the insane advances in technology, who knows what heights the industry will reach. One thing's for sure, though: We'll certainly stick around to see 'em. And we hope you will too.

Whew. We've barely scratched the surface. If you're looking for more entertaining history about comics, be sure to check out the following books: *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*, *Comics Between the Panels*, *DC Comics: Sixty Years of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes*, *Batman: The Complete History*, *The Marvel Universe* and *Superman: The Complete History*. Now go learn some more stuff.

HOT STUFF

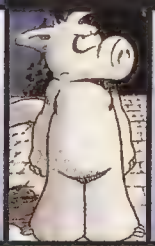
X-MEN MOVIE

Bryan Singer's big-budget X-movie starring Patrick Stewart (left) will shove mutants to the masses, resulting in more X-Men merchandise than you can shake a Wolverine at.



YU-GI-OH!

Kiss your Ash goodbye. Yu-Gi-Oh!, the new Japanese sensation, is slowly replacing Pokémon mania. Look for it to rule the next decade.



CEREBUS

Dave Sim's 300-issue opus of an aardvark with a sword will finally see the end of the character and the title around March 2004.

J. TROY (4) ILLUSTRATION BY JACK CRAW; BLADE PHOTO BY PHOTO: TIM HUNTER; © 1998 STEWART PRINTING COURTESY OF COMICS BUYLINE

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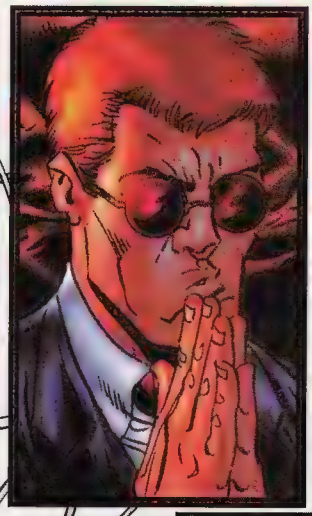
CASTING call

MARVEL KNIGHTS casts the DAREDEVIL MOVIE!

BY JIMMY PALMIOTTI, KEVIN SMITH AND JOE QUESADA

Well, HOORAY! *Wizard* has considered *Daredevil* worthy of the ol' "Casting Call" treatment. Coming up with just the right group of thespians capable of handling DD's recent "Guardian Devil" storyarc—done by yours truly—was a daunting task, but we here at Marvel Knights tackled it head-on and almost hurt ourselves doing it. Joe Quesada chimed in with his visual sense to choose folks with just the right look. Jimmy Palmiotti, with his encyclopedic knowledge of movies, based his choice on who's got that Hollywood "juice." And then Kevin Smith came in and tried to throw all that out until he was beaten into submission. So, without further ado, here now is the Marvel Knights Hornhead "Casting Couch." Uh, "Call." Make that "Casting Call."



MATT DAMON as DAREDEVIL

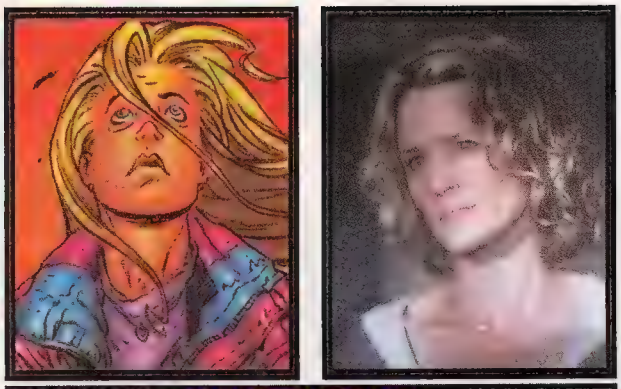
He played a novice lawyer in "The Rainmaker," now it's time for him to play a seasoned vet. Who else has the intensity and the acting chops to play Daredevil/Matt Murdock but Matt "Good Will Hunting" Damon?

HUH!? FORMER BOND BABE FAMKE JANSSEN (JEAN GREY IN THE UPCOMING "X-MEN" MOVIE) AND FREAKY GUY CHRISYOPHER WALKEN ("SLEEPY HOLLOW") ARE THE ACTORS CHOSEN MOST FREQUENTLY IN "CASTING CALL." EACH HAVE FOUR APPEARANCES TO THEIR CREDIT.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

OLIVER PLATT as FOGGY NELSON

Foggy Nelson is a character Oliver Platt was born to play. Check him out in "Bulworth."

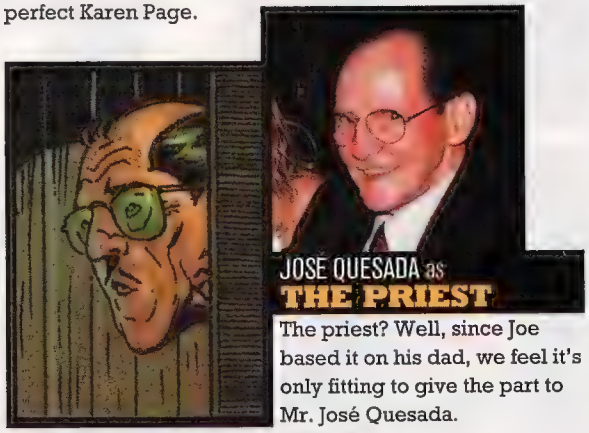


ROBIN WRIGHT as KAREN PAGE

Robin Wright ("Forrest Gump") has the perfect balance of knockout good looks and a touch of that "come hither" trampiness—Nudge, nudge, wink, wink. She'd make a perfect Karen Page.

SIGOURNEY WEAVER as ROSALIND SHARPE

Who to play Rosalind Sharpe, Matt and Foggy's law partner (until recently) and Foggy's mother (still)? Why, Sigourney Weaver ("Alien: Resurrection"), of course! Old enough to be Oliver Platt's mom, but hey, we still like her looks!



JOSE QUESADA as THE PRIEST

The priest? Well, since Joe based it on his dad, we feel it's only fitting to give the part to Mr. José Quesada.

ANNE BANCROFT as SISTER MAGGIE

Anne Bancroft ("The Graduate") is our choice for Daredevil's nun mother, Sister Maggie. She's old enough to play Matt Damon's mother, and looks like she could give any schoolchild a good rap across the knuckles with a ruler.

ANGELINA JOLIE as BLACK WIDOW

What would our movie be without some major babe-age? Angelina Jolie ("The Bone Collector") is our unanimous vote-getter for Natasha Romanov, the Black Widow. Hoo-hah!

HARLEY QUINN SMITH as THE BABY

Who says that having a famous director/movie star for a daddy doesn't have its perks? The Baby would be played by none other than Kevin's newborn daughter, Harley Quinn Smith.

MIKE STARR as MR. GABRIEL

Mike Starr from "Mad Dog and Glory" and "GoodFellas" makes the perfect flunky for Mysterio as Mr. Gabriel.

ALEC BALDWIN as BULLSEYE

If you've seen "The Juror"—not that we're saying you should—you can see that Alec Baldwin has just the right touch of insanity in his eyes to play ruthless assassin/DD archfoe Bullseye.

KEVIN SPACEY as MYSTERIO

Portraying the evil illusionist Mysterio may be the most demanding part in our "Guardian Devil" summer blockbuster. So Kevin Spacey ("American Beauty") is the only guy who gets his own private trailer.

ROBERT DE NIRO as THE KINGPIN

Remember "The Untouchables"? As a balding, fat Al Capone, Robert De Niro pounded more than just hamburgers and milkshakes for his role—he pounded a few skulls as well! This is the only man who can truly throw his weight around and play the Kingpin of Crime.

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ AND KEVIN SMITH BEHIND THE CAMERA

As a little added bonus, what about a director and screenwriter for this flick? Robert Rodriguez ("Desperado") is the man who should helm the camera. As for a screenwriter? Well, since Kevin just stepped out of the room to use the can, let's stick his name in here. He kinda knows the characters a bit.

QUIET ON THE SET!

HUH!? *WIZARD'S* RUN SOME PRETTY LAME THINGS OVER THE YEARS. TOPS ON THE CHART? A SIDEBAR WE USED TO RUN CALLED "LOOK FAMILIAR?" IN IT, WE'D SHOW PHOTOS OF FANS' PETS, PROMISING PRIZES TO THOSE WE SPOTLIGHTED.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

OLIVER PLATT, ROBIN WRIGHT, SIGOURNEY WEAVER, ANNE BANCROFT, ROBERT DE NIRO, AND ROBERT RODRIGUEZ COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION; MATT DAMON © STEVE SONDS; JOSÉ QUESADA COURTESY MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT; ANGELINA JOLIE AND KEVIN SPACEY © JEFF SLOCOMB; HARLEY QUINN SMITH COURTESY KEVIN SMITH; ALEC BALDWIN © ERIC BASKIN; KEVIN SMITH © PAUL SCHIRALDI. QUESADA/SMITH/PALMIOTTI AND SMITH PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI.

"An amazing feat of animation, a stylish psychological thriller... creates an increasingly terrifying world and pulls you into it with the effectiveness of a Hitchcock suspense classic." -KEVIN THOMAS, LA TIMES

SATOSHI KON'S ANIMATED PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

PERFECT BLUE

IN THE WORLD OF MAKE BELIEVE... THE PRICE OF FAME MAY NOT BE WORTH THE COST OF IDENTITY

Pop singer Mima Kirigoe looks forward to a bright new career when she quits her chart-topping trio to become an actress. When she lands a role in a sexually-charged murder mystery, Mima's life begins to fall apart. Reality and hallucinations merge into a terrifying netherworld where innocence is lost and dreams become nightmares.

Director Satoshi Kon (Memories), special advisor Katsuhiro Otomo (Akira) and Madhouse Studios (Ninja Scroll) bring Yoshikazu Takeuchi's thrilling suspense novel to the screen in a tour de force that brings animation to a bold new level.

"A startling and powerful film. If Alfred Hitchcock partnered with Walt Disney they'd make a picture like this." -ROGER CORMAN

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"excuse me... who are you?"

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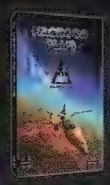

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X CHANGE Hey, there's somebody new in my pants.

HUGH DA MAN!

Aussie action star Jackman replaces Scott as new Wolvie

The "X-Men" movie's undergoing a serious latitude adjustment.

After an "Impossible" accident sidelined actor Dougray Scott's hopes of playing Wolverine in this summer's mutant epic, the folks at Marvel looked to the Land Down Under to find their hero from the Great White North.

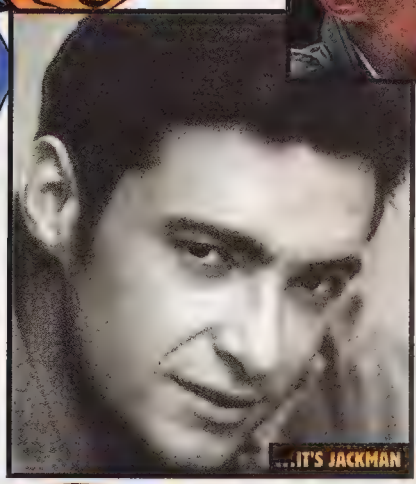
X-Men producers Bryan Singer and Tom DeSanto tapped Australian actor Hugh Jackman to take over the role of everyone's favorite Canadian berzerker in the big budget film.

Jackman signed the Wolverine contract just about two weeks before his predecessor was scheduled to step in front of the cameras. He began rehearsals and fight choreography for "X-Men" days later, then moved to Toronto where the movie's being filmed.

"Our stunt coordinators were really nervous about him being able to handle the claws, but they said he took to it like a natural," DeSanto said. "They were surprised how really quickly he learned the routine and nailed it. Much better than anyone ever expected. He's handling it like a professional stuntman."

NOT JACKO...

Scott reportedly lost the gig because his current work assignment, "Mission: Impossible 2", was running behind schedule while filming in Australia. Scott plays one of the villains in the Tom Cruise action-thriller, and a shoulder injury on the set of the film further threatened to lengthen his stay down under.



...IT'S JACKMAN

The "X-Men" producers notified Scott they needed a guarantee he'd be on-set in Toronto by October 18. Scott could offer no such guarantee, so producers began the search for a replacement.

They settled on Jackman, who was one of the contenders for the role before Scott nabbed it. The Aussie did

JACKO PHOTO BY '98 NBC/FOTO FANTASIES; JACKMAN PHOTO COURTESY OF HUGH JACKMAN

HUH!? *WIZARD* ACTUALLY DESIGNED THE CHRONIC AND BLUNTMAN *WIZARD* COVER THAT RAN IN THE OPENING CREDITS TO "CHASING AMY." HOPEFULLY YOU DIDN'T BLINK.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

a screen test with Anna (Rogue) Paquin; Avi Arad, Marvel Films president and "X-Men" producer, said it was amazing.

Jackman was born in Sydney, Australia, where he majored in journalism but gave up a career as a newshound to become an actor.

While not a high-profile name or even known outside of Australian film circles, Jackman's best known in his native land for the many musicals he's done including "Beauty and the Beast," "Sunset Boulevard" and "Oklahoma!".

His previous TV credits include "Corelli," a TV version of "Oklahoma!" and "Halifax EP." He's also starred in a couple of Australian movies: "Paperback Hero" and "Erskineville Kings," most recently.

Wolverine is his biggest role to date, and his breakout role for North American audiences. ■ **CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE AND PATRICK SAURIOL**

X-MEN MOVIE WATCH

MORE USELESS FACTS

Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters should have security this good.

Filming continues on the "X-Men" motion picture, and the set's wrapped tighter than Chamber.

No more than a handful of facts about the film (such as the cast of characters) have been released, and the producers of the highly anticipated flick are doing their best to keep things hush-hush.

TONGUE TWISTER I said "Left HAND Blue, Cyclops!"

How? Well, one source inside the House of Ideas has seen a script (without actually getting a chance to read it) and said the film folks have added at least one special feature to make life difficult for any insiders who might be thinking about visiting the local Kinko's to tip off the X-crazed fanboys.

Each page of the script reportedly has the name of the owner "branded" onto it, an anti-photocopy mark that would immediately let Marvel's movie police know who spilled the beans.

As for movie merchandise, *Wizard* sources indicated representatives from Toy Biz have already visited the Great White North for a sneak peak at the "X-Men" set. While they're unable to comment on what they've seen, and no announcements have been made about any X-Men figures, it's a pretty safe bet the Biz will be pushing out a line of X-memorabilia just in time for the film's summer release.

On the comic tie-in front, the folks behind the X-books are already working on a new look for the X-Men, which is set to debut in the comics in March. While the creators are reportedly keeping the movie in mind while creating the team's updated duds, word has it even they haven't seen any final costume designs for the movie characters.

So much for sharing. ■ **CL**

X-MEN PLAYING TWISTER PHOTO BY PAUL SCIRALDI; CAMPBELL PHOTO COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION

SPY-JACKED

Campbell learning new trade

Bruce Campbell cannot escape the past. He's gotten medieval in "Army of Darkness," gone west in "The Adventures of Brisco County, Jr." and dabbled in Grecian formula as Autolycus, the King of Thieves on both "Xena" and "Hercules." Come early 2000, America's favorite action figure is the 1700s' answer to 007 in the TV series "Jack of All Trades."

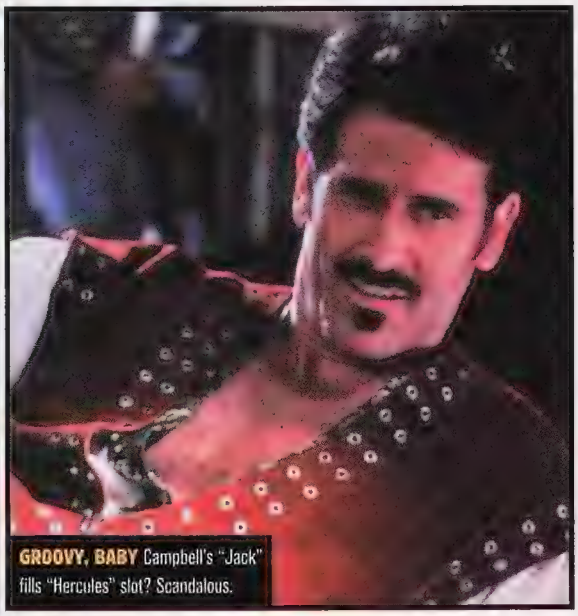
"My character is Jack Stiles, one of the first secret agents," says Campbell of his swashbuckling starring role. "I work for the British Secret Service, foiling plots for their government every week. It's primarily a comedy of errors."

No secret agent worth his salt would be caught dead without a femme fatale: Boris followed Natasha, James Bond chased Pussy Galore and Jack has Emilia, played by New Zealand actress Angela Marie Dotchin—who, like Campbell, has appeared in both "Hercules" and "Xena."

While the story takes place in the West Indies, the show is being filmed entirely on location in New Zealand. Campbell says "Every frame of the production is being done there; editing, post-production, everything. I'm the token American actor."

But Campbell wears some other hats on "Jack" besides that of star—he'll also be directing some episodes and getting executive producer credit, along with longtime associates Sam Raimi and Robert Tapert.

"Jack of all Trades" has some big shoes to fill; after six years and 111 episodes, the long-running "Hercules" series will conclude at the end of the year. The half-hour long "Jack"—along with the sci-fi space opera "Cleopatra 2525"—are slated to fill the soon-to-be-vacant time slot. Both Campbell's show and "Hercules" belong to production company Studios USA, which can mean only one thing: crossover cameos! "We're hoping to get some key and recurring guest stars from the other shows," says Campbell. "Anyone from Ted Raimi to Michael Hurst to Kevin Smith. We'll be knocking on their doors; they may tell us to take a hike, but all you can do is ask, right?" ■ **JENNIFER MOORE**



GROOVY, BABY Campbell's "Jack" fills "Hercules" slot? Scandalous.

MOVIE MADMAN

Allred invades Tinseltown

Mike Allred can add a new entry on his growing resume: "Movie Mogul."

Besides doing *Madman Comics* for Dark Horse and his own independently published title *The Atomics* (coming in January), Allred has worked as a musician and independent filmmaker to boot. Currently, he's got three different movie projects circulating through Hollywood.

Manifest Films, the production company behind "The People Vs. Larry Flynt," is currently developing Allred's sci-fi rock opera mini-series *Red Rocket 7* for the silver screen. "They're in love with the concept," says Allred of his story of a journalist who discovers a cell of alien clones who've been hiding on Earth for forty years. "The comic might have another life as a big-budget film—it'd be an amazingly original, exciting epic." Though there's no official screenplay for the movie as of yet, there's already buzz about pop starlet Lauryn Hill possibly playing the lead.

Slated to begin filming at the end of October is "G-Men from Hell," based on characters that first appeared in Allred's first comic, *Grafik Muzik*, published by Caliber Press back in 1990. "The story's about two 50-ish, film-noir G-men, Dean Crept and Mike Mattress, who died and went to Hell," says Allred. "They escape with the intent to do good deeds and earn their way into heaven. However, they're socially and morally bankrupt. That's where the humor lies." Christopher Coppola (yes, of that same Coppola family) will direct the film for Sawmill Productions.

GET THERAPY Could "Madman" drive filmgoers bonkers? Robert Roderiguez (right) thinks so.

And speaking of escapes from hell, the long-anticipated "Madman" movie has slipped free of the development vortex at Universal Pictures and is back on track thanks to maverick filmmaker Robert Rodriguez.

With all this heavy courting from Hollywood, will Allred trade in his drawing board for a pair of Ray-Bans? "Screw Hollywood," says Allred with a laugh. "Seriously, all this film stuff has been fun; it's exercised other creative muscles, but it's taken me away from comic books, where I have the most creative satisfaction and freedom. My aspirations are to do the best comic books that I can and hope that these movies at least don't embarrass me." ■ JM

BOX-OFFICE BREAKDOWN

STAR STRUCK Prequel pounded the competition.

The Top 10 Comic-Related and Sci-Fi Films of 1999

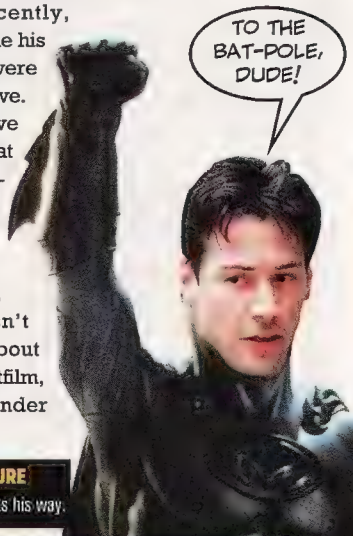
NOTE: Figures are as of press time	Domestic Gross
1. "Star Wars: Ep. One"	$426.8 million
2. "The Sixth Sense"	$249.9 million
3. "Austin Powers 2"	$205.4 million
4. "The Matrix"	$171.4 million
5. "Tarzan"	$170.3 million
6. "The Mummy"	$155.3 million
7. "Blair Witch Project"	$140 million
8. "South Park"	$52 million
9. "Mystery Men"	$29.7 million
10. "The Iron Giant"	$22.7 million

BAT-DUDE

Reeves sends off bat signals

The Keanu Crusader? It's not as dopey as you might think. Then again, maybe it is.

As most of his fans know, Keanu Reeves ("The Matrix") considers himself a comic book fan. In fact, there were rumors early on that had him jostling for a part in "X-Men." Recently, Reeves told a British magazine his ideas for a new Bat-film if he were to play the Dark Knight Detective. Reeves said the film would have to be dark and somber, and that for him to star in it, Jack Nicholson would have to come back and play the Joker. It appears Reeves was just speaking out of the other side of his cowl, because Warner Bros. hasn't announced any decisions about who might play in the next Batfilm, or even when it might get under way. ■ PS



BAT AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE Gotham goes California crazy, if Keanu gets his way.

HUH!? IN THE PAST, *WIZARD* ACTUALLY USED A SPOKESMODEL NAMED CRYSTAL AT THE WIZARD BOOTH AT COMIC CONVENTIONS. WE USED A HANDFUL OF DIFFERENT MODELS, AND ONE WAS EVEN A PORN STAR.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

MOVIEMADE PHOTO COURTESY FIREFLY COLLECTION. STAR WARS EPISODE I PHOTO © LUCAS FILMS. REEVES PHOTO BY JOON BOLAND. batman PHOTO COURTESY ARCHIVE BLDG.

TRAILERS...

'BEYOND' VIDEO "We're on track for a delivery date of November 7 of next year," says Paul Dini, the writer of the upcoming direct-to-video "Batman Beyond" movie now in production. The animation is being done by TMS Japan, a group that's previously worked on episodes of the original "Batman" animated series. Dini was tight-lipped about what happens in the story, but did offer one tantalizing word when asked about the rumor Mark Hamill (who voiced the Joker on "Batman") might be heard in the new movie: "Possibly," hinted Dini. Look for a sneak peek on "The Iron Giant" movie, now out on video.

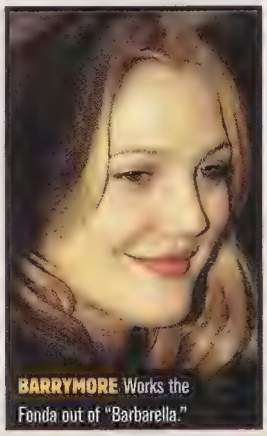
BALDWIN plagues "Clerks."

'CLERKS' IN THE WORKS February 7 is the date ABC's animated series based on Kevin Smith's "Clerks" is set to debut. Stars Brian O'Halloran and Jeff Anderson return to voice their characters of Dante and Randal, with Alec Baldwin ("The Shadow") playing the resident town villain, Leonardo Leonardo, "who's kind of like the Lex Luthor of the town where the stores are at," explains Smith. Six episodes have been initially ordered by ABC, with the possibility of a second season to come in the fall if the ratings are good.

SUPES GOES SURFIN' Warner Bros. Online and Brilliant Digital Entertainment have announced plans to create a new Internet-based series called "Superman: The Menace of Metallo." The new Superman series will be one of six new shows debuting as part of the Multipath Movie Channel available on Warner's Entertaindom (HYPERLINK http://www.entertaindom.com) Website. The interactive, 3-D, computer-animated series launches this winter.

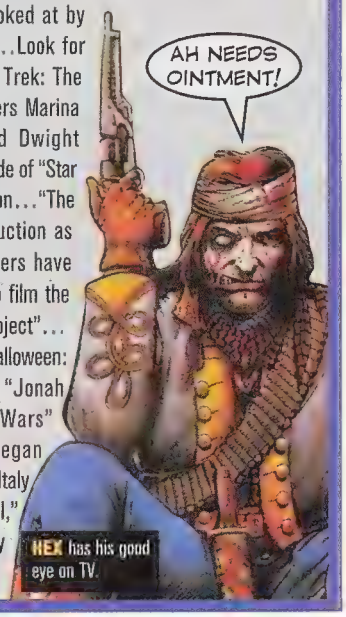
MILLAR MAKES TV MARK Mark Millar, upcoming writer of WildStorm Comics' *The Authority*, will write and direct Britain's Channel 4 made-for-TV movie "Sikeside." "It's going to be shot like "Trainspotting," focusing on a gang of junkie teenage vampires living in a run-down Scottish housing estate," said Millar. "There's no music or special effects, but the horror is going to be more extreme than anything else we've ever seen on television. We're starting where other flicks draw the line, and every taboo will be broken over 80 minutes. We're talking to a young Glasgow comedian to play the lead role, but the cast will be otherwise unknown. It's the perfect movie to look forward to after the inevitable disappointment of 'X-Men.'"

'HARSH' TREATMENT After just three episodes, Fox has closed the gates to "Harsh Realm," the new show from "X-Files" producer Chris Carter. Carter was quoted in Daily Variety as saying Fox "botched" the launch of the new show. "I think in the end, it looks rather misguided to have premiered the show without any promotional base, certainly when the reviews of it were good," he said. "I have a feeling we're a victim of a much bigger problem at Fox." Eight episodes of the show have already been completed, but it's unlikely they will wind up at another network. Sources at Fox declined comment.



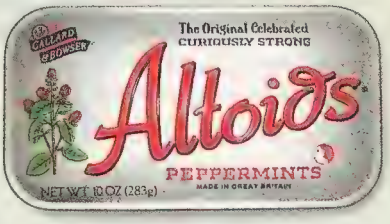
BARRYMORE Works the Fonda out of "Barbarella."

SHORT TAKES Rumor has it director Darren Aronofsky ("Pi") might be considering doing a live-action "Aeon Flux" movie...After starring in the big-screen "Charlie's Angels" movie in development, Drew Barrymore might put on leather boots and remake "Barbarella"...Peter Bagge's *Hate* comic book is being looked at by HBO as a possible TV series...Look for a guest appearance by "Star Trek: The Next Generation" cast members Marina Sirtis (Counselor Troi) and Dwight Schultz (Lt. Barclay) in an episode of "Star Trek: Voyager" later this season..."The Mummy 2" could be in production as early as May 2000...Producers have begun scouting for locations to film the sequel to "The Blair Witch Project"... Screenwriter Robert Zappia ("Halloween: H20") is writing a proposed "Jonah Hex" pilot for Fox..."Star Wars" producer Rick McCallum began scouting locations in southern Italy for possible use in "Episode II," which begins shooting in July of 2000... ■ PS



HEX has his good eye on TV.

MERRY XL-MAS



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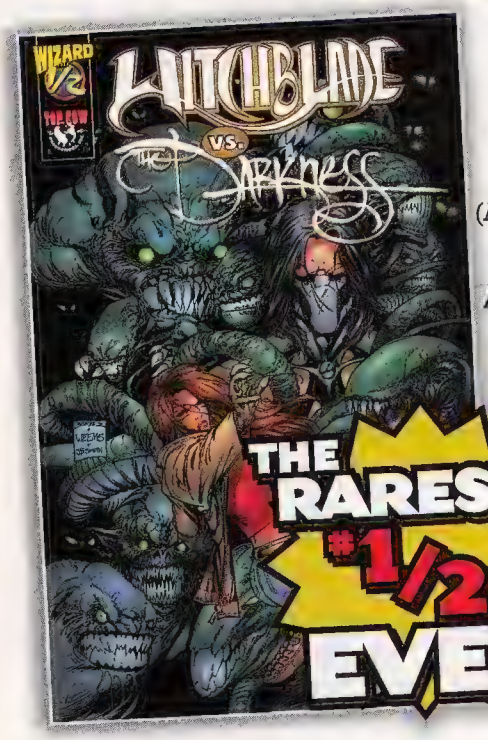
BARRYMORE AND BALDWIN PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

WITCHBLADE VS. DARKNESS #1/2



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X Date / /

MY SIGNATURE MEANS THAT I AGREE TO THE CONDITIONS APPEARING ON THIS APPLICATION.

Please complete only if you have moved or changed employers in the last three years.

Previous address

City State ZIP

Previous employer Years there

Annual fee	None.
† Annual Percentage Rate (APR)	14.99% fixed rate for purchases.
Grace period for repayment of balance for purchases	At least 25 days, if each month, we receive payment in full of your New Balance Total by the Payment Due Date.
Method of computing the balance for purchases	Average Daily Balance (including new transactions).
Transaction fees for cash advances and fees for paying late or exceeding the credit limit	Transaction fee for Bank and ATM cash advances: 2% of each cash advance (minimum $2). Transaction fee for credit card cash advance checks: 2% of each cash advance (minimum $2, maximum $25. Late-payment fee: $29. Over-the-credit-limit fee: $29.
Transaction fee for purchases	Transaction fee for the purchase of wire transfers, money orders, bets, lottery tickets, and casino gaming chips: 2% of each such purchase (minimum $2).

†-MORE APR INFORMATION-

The current promotional Annual Percentage Rate (APR) offer for cash advance checks and balance transfers is 3.9% through your first 4 statement closing dates, commencing the month after your account is opened. When your minimum monthly payment is not received by the close of the first complete billing cycle following its Payment Due Date, or when the promotional offer expires, whichever occurs first, the APR that will be applied to both new and outstanding cash advance balances (consisting of cash advance checks and balance transfer transactions) will be 14.99%. MBNA may allocate your payment to balances (including new transactions) with lower APRs before balances with a higher APR.

-CONDITIONS-

I have read this application, and everything I have stated in it is true. I authorize MBNA America Bank, N.A. (MBNA) to check my credit, employment history, or any other information and to report to others such information and credit experience with me. I understand that the acceptance or use of any card issued will be subject to the terms of this application and the Credit Card Agreement that will be sent with the card, and I agree to be responsible for all charges incurred according to such terms. I am at least 18 years of age. I consent to and authorize MBNA, and its affiliates to monitor and/or record my telephone conversations with any of their representatives to better ensure quality service. **Information about me or my account may be shared among MBNA and its related companies for marketing or administrative purposes. I may prohibit such sharing of information, other than information pertaining solely to transactions or experiences between me and MBNA (or an MBNA-related company), by writing to MBNA at PO Box 15342, Wilmington, DE 19850 and including my name, address, home phone number, and the applicable MBNA account number[‡].** I accept that MBNA may, at its discretion, periodically consider any card for an automatic upgrade. The information in this application is accurate as of 04/99 and may have changed after that date. For more current information, please call MBNA at 1-800-523-7666. TTY users, please call 1-800-833-6262.

BASIC TRAINING

LIQUID! GRAPHICS SHOWS YOU

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

COLOR 101

We know what you're thinking. "Coloring? You've got to be kidding! All these bozos need to do is stay within the lines and they're set." Truth be told, it's impossible to cover such a copious topic as color in one sitting. In this column, we hope to touch on some basic principles of color theory and explain some of the thought processes that go into doing what we do as co-owners of coloring house Liquid! Graphics. Ultimately, we hope to convince you to go out and upgrade from that box of 64 colors with the sharpener in the back. You be the judge.

CHRIS LICHTNER

ARON LUSEN

PHOTOS COURTESY LIQUID! GRAPHICS

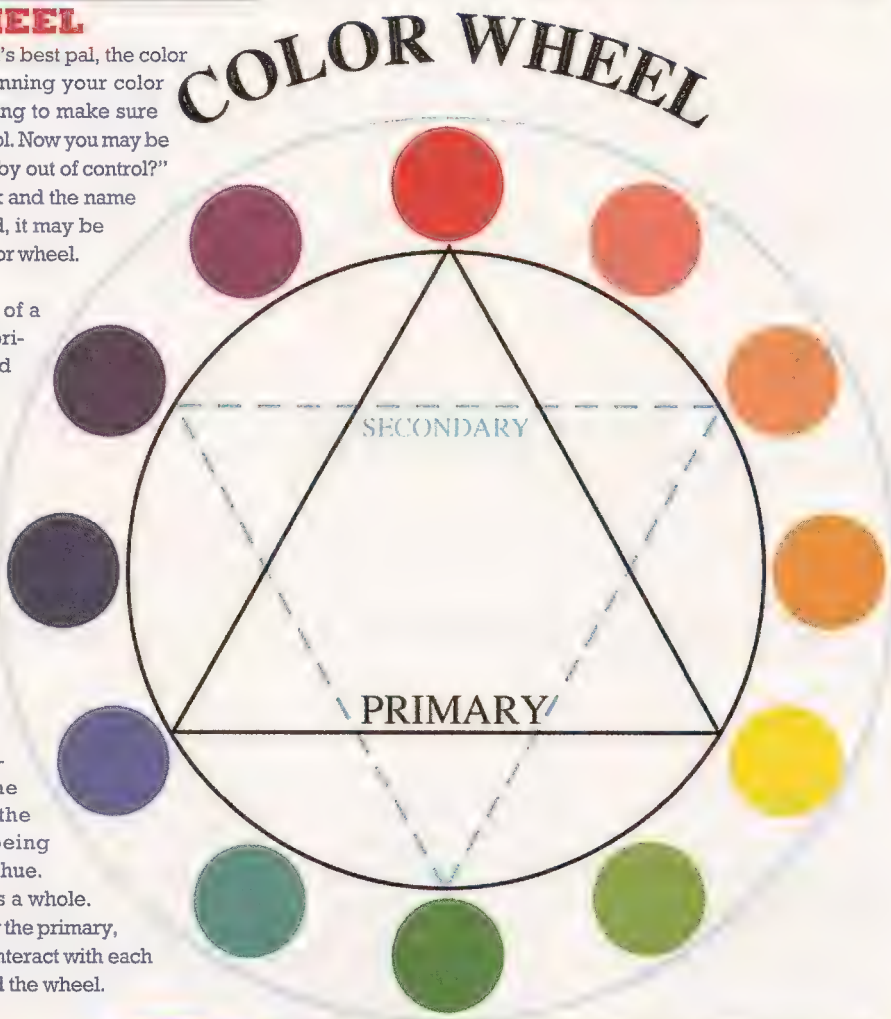
SPINNIN' WHEEL

Let's talk about every colorist's best pal, the color wheel—a useful tool for planning your color schemes and double-checking to make sure they aren't getting out of control. Now you may be asking, "What do they mean by out of control?" Well, if you look at your work and the name "Toucan Sam" comes to mind, it may be time to whip out that trusty color wheel. Hey, it doesn't lie!

Check out this diagram of a color wheel (at right). The primary hues are red, yellow and blue. You'll notice that the primary colors form an equilateral triangle within the circumference of the wheel.

The three secondary hues are orange, purple and green. Secondary hues are the result of a primary hue being combined with another primary hue. Secondary hues are located equidistantly between the primary hues, forming another triangle. All other colors on the wheel are "tertiary hues, the result of a "primary hue being combined with a secondary hue.

Review the color wheel as a whole. You should be able to see how the primary, secondary and tertiary hues interact with each other as they progress around the wheel.



HUH!? ARTISTS BART SEARS ("BRUTES AND BABES") AND GREG CAPULLO ("KRASH COURSE") EACH HAD A LONG-STANDING "HOW TO DRAW" COLUMN IN *WIZARD*. JOHN BYRNE WAS SET TO TAKE OVER NEXT, BUT "CREATIVE DIFFERENCES" KEPT IT FROM EVER RUNNING.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

COLOR ME BLUE

Have you ever noticed how colors can evoke a certain ambiance? That's all about using color to create mood, baby! When choosing a set of colors to work with, remember that different hues convey distinct feelings.

Check out this image of E.V.E from our upcoming title *E.V.E Protomecha*, due out in February from Top Cow (shameless plug). Here we have E.V.E set on an empty background (fig. A). Now, look at the same figure of E.V.E on a red background (fig. B). The warmth of the background really kicks up a sense of drama here. Skeptical? Well, let's move on to the next image. Here we have the same figure, but on a cool background (fig. C). There is now a more calming feeling coming from the image, a huge contrast to the previous one with the red background.

Here are some basic moods and the colors that convey them:

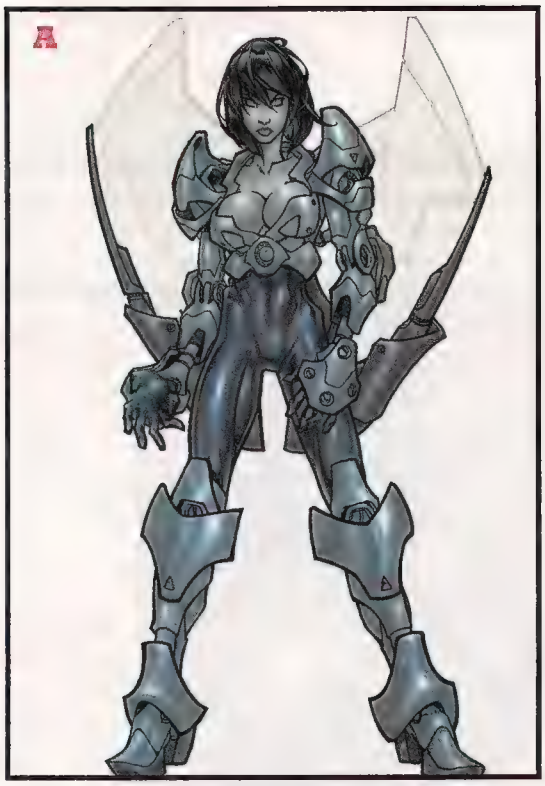
Warm Colors (red, orange)—convey heat and energy

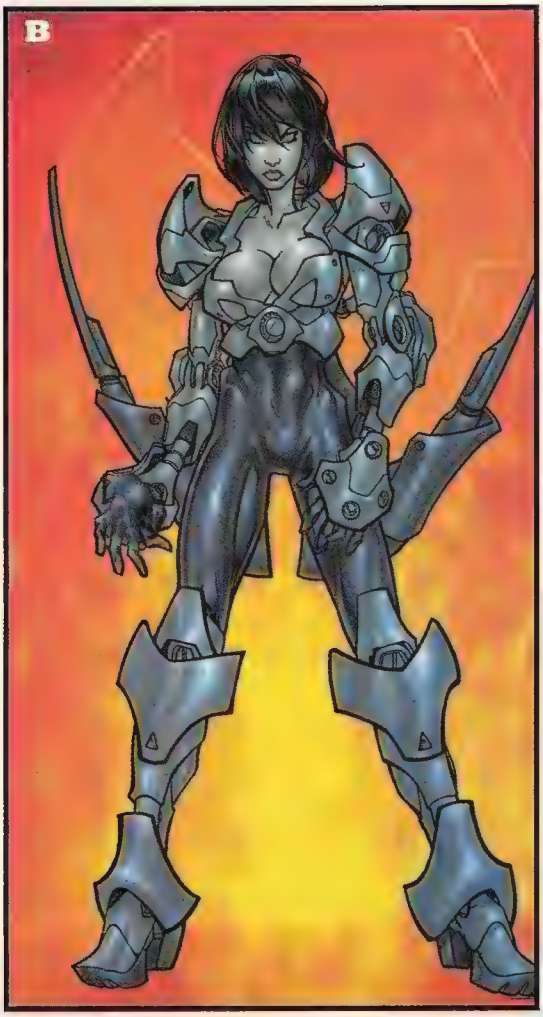
Cool Colors (blue, green)—convey cold and calmness

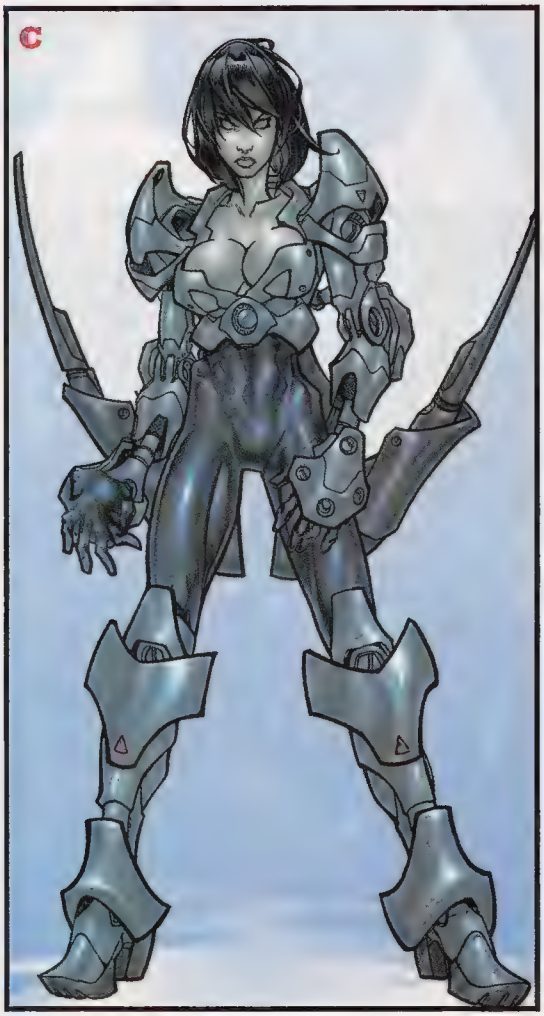
Light Colors (colors with white added to them)—convey lightness and careless freedom

Dark Colors (colors with black added to them)—oppressive, conveying gloom

Colorful (bright colors)—generate excitement! Why do you think advertisements are usually in bright yellows, silly!?!





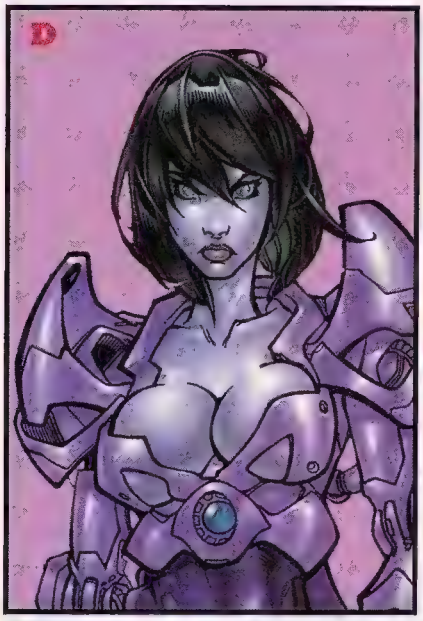


SCHEMES AND DREAMS

Next, let's discuss color schemes. They sound so devious. You can relax though, they have nothing to do with us plotting our revenge against pencilers who blow their deadlines. A scheme refers to a combination of colors that are used together to elicit an overall mood. Color schemes allow you to follow certain established patterns to make everything work together nicely. Follow these road maps, and they'll take you where you want to go. Let's rattle them off:

Monochromatic Schemes

This would be the most basic of schemes—schemes that are all done in one color. Another subcategory is achromatic, which are basically schemes with no color. But that's not what this "Basic Training" is all about, eh?

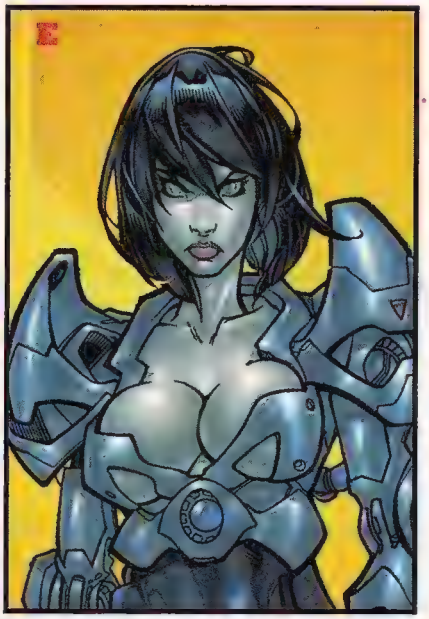


Analogous Schemes

(Fig. D) Schemes made up of any three consecutive colors on the wheel of color. Pick three—any three!

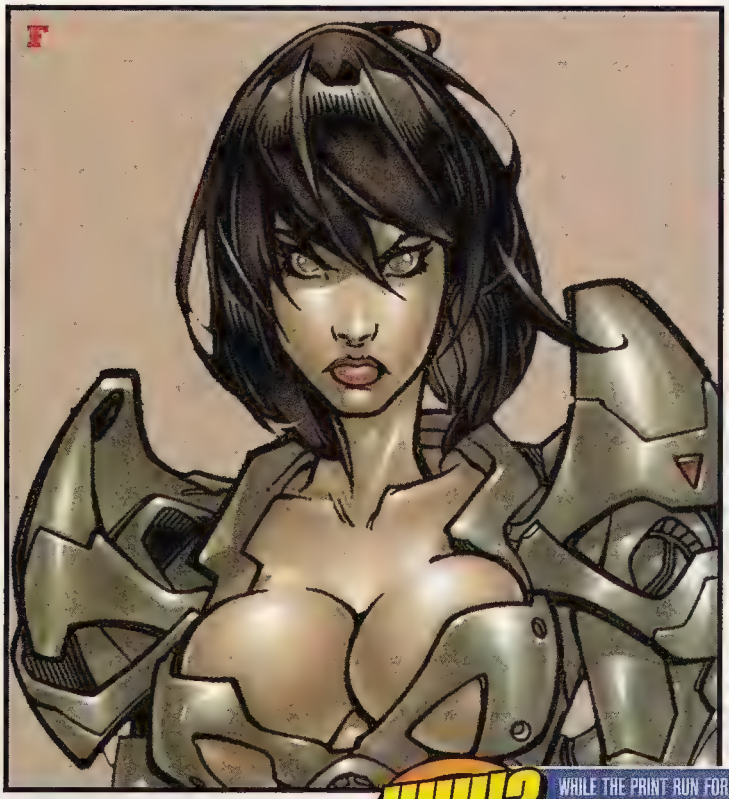
Complementary Schemes

(Fig. E) Compositions that rely on a color juxtaposed with one directly opposite it on the almighty color wheel—that is, its complementary color.



Clash Schemes

These schemes combine a color with a color to the left or the right of its complement.



Neutral Hues

(Fig. F) These are schemes that rely on colors that have been "neutralized" by adding either black or its complement to it. Thus, resulting in colors that are very grayish and, well, neutral.

Primary Schemes

As the name implies, schemes that use the primaries, red, yellow and blue.

Secondary Schemes

These are...can you guess? Yes, schemes that use the secondaries, green, violet and orange. Easy, huh?

Tertiary Triad Schemes

Lastly are schemes that use one of two combos. Either red-orange, yellow-green or blue-violet. Or they use blue-green, yellow-orange, or red-violet. Note that all of these are equidistant from each other on the color wheel. Cool, huh?

HUH!? WHILE THE PRINT RUN FOR *WIZARD* #100 WILL USE 214,078 LBS. OF PAPER, WE'VE USED OVER 20 MILLION LBS. SINCE ISSUE #1! THAT'S A WHOLE LOTTA DEAD TREES.

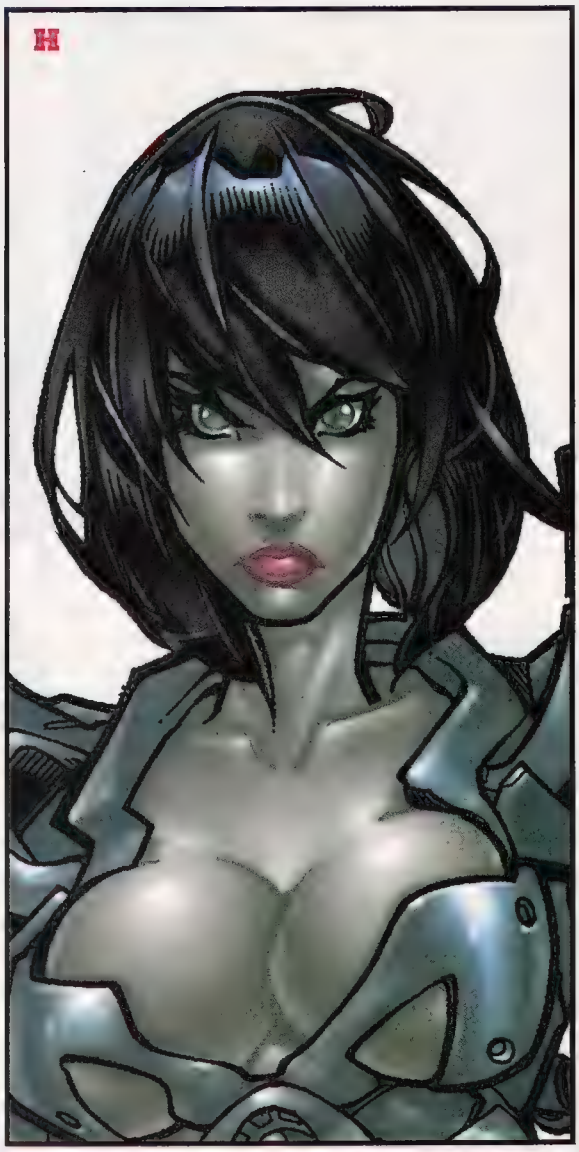
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

STYLISTICALLY SPEAKING

So this brings us finally to the most important concept of all—style. Here's where you take the things you've learned from the previous pages and put them all together. Mix them up nicely, add a bit of your own personality and voila, you've got "style"! Style is really the heart of coloring and oftentimes separates what is good from what is great. There are a ton of different styles out there and we dare you to make up your own.

At one end of the spectrum you have flat rendering. This is most often seen in anime and consists of, at its most basic level, a use of a dark and a light color to render your drawings three-dimensionally. Oftentimes that's called two-tone rendering. However, you can easily add more tones to this style of rendering and all of a sudden you could be using three, four or five tones, yet still just be using flat colors (fig. G). On the other end of the spectrum, you'd have fully rendered drawings. Here you would attempt to render your drawings as photo realistically as possible. Oftentimes a colorist will use a very airbrush-oriented style to mimic reality as best as possible (fig. H).

G


H

Well, that ought to do it for this edition of "Chris and Aron spout nonsense." Please tune in next month for someone who will hopefully be a bit more coherent. By the way, we know on the outside you're wishing for a penciler, but deep inside that dark heart of yours, in the coldest recesses that you reveal to no one, you're secretly hoping that we'll be back again. Admit it, you love color, you do.

Christian Lichtner and Aron Lusen are the co-owners of Liquid! Graphics. Known for their work on X-Men *and* Battle Chasers, *their new creator-owned book* E.V.E Protomecha *(www.protomecha.com) will be out early next year from Top Cow, as will* SoulSaga *(www.soulsaga.com), a new title by Lichtner and Stephen Platt.*

Drawing BOARD

MEET THE WINNER OF THE 'DRAW WIZARD #100'S COVER CONTEST'

VAMPIRES HAUNTED CARLO BARBERI EVERY NIGHT.

Dracula would stalk the then 6-year-old in his dreams soon after falling asleep. He would wake up screaming, in a cold sweat. Then one night just as a vampire was about to sink his fangs into Barberi's small neck, the boy was suddenly transformed into Superman. For the first time, he fought back. From that point on, Barberi never had the dream again. More importantly, he never forgot what it was like to be the Man of Steel.

"From then on whenever I was scared I just thought about being Superman," Barberi admitted.

Nowadays, Barberi fears little, especially when he puts pen to paper. The 27-year-old artist from Monterrey, Mexico was selected out of nearly 5,000 entries as the winner of the "Draw *Wizard* #100 Contest," the first fan ever to draw a cover for the magazine. With an awesome Batman submission sketch, Barberi earned the right to advance to the finals where his pencils of Thor were chosen to adorn the cover.

"I'd never entered a contest before," Barberi exclaimed. "When I won I couldn't believe it. I didn't think it was real. But I also hoped it would be a way for more people to see my art and maybe I could get work in comics. I thought maybe it would be my big chance."

Though he'd never entered a contest before, the aspiring artist and current graphic designer has been practicing almost his entire life. Barberi said he started drawing superheroes when he was 4 years old. He can even remember drawing Superman stick figures on his family's walls and table legs.

Besides doodling, peer pressure played a part in Barberi's development as an artist. Some of his biggest influences have been his friends such as Jose Ladrónn and Humberto Ramos, both already established comic talents. Barberi said while he respects both artists works, he's trying to start his

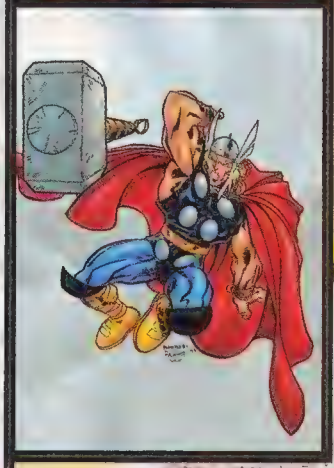
ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

COVER BOY

CARLO BARBERI

THE COVER



HUH!? NOT COUNTING CELEBRATORY ISSUE #50 AND #100, THE LAST REGULAR COVER APPEARANCE OF OUR ONCE-TRADEMARK GOOFY PURPLE WIZARD HAT WAS ISSUE #17.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

Drawing Board

RUNNERUP

DEADPOOL

by Ethan Peacock
Alberta, CANADA

You expect to see some flash from a guy named Peacock.

And our second-place finisher in the 'Draw *Wizard* #100 Contest' gave us just that. Ethan Peacock of Alberta, Canada, immediately caught our judges' attention with his rendition of Deadpool, making the contest just a two-man race between himself and the winner.

Besides diving into the 'Pool, Peacock depicted Fathom, Danger Girl, Witchblade, Wonder Woman and Spider-Man, all of which showed serious talent.

Even more impressive than his skill as an artist is Peacock's ability to ink and color his own work to create amazing (and flashy!) visuals.

"I really just like to create dynamic pictures," Peacock said. "I let color do a lot of the work. Color adds a lot to the original piece. I try to develop themes and looks for a project when I start."

Peacock knows about more than just comic art though. He has a degree in fine arts and has studied different art forms ranging from Renaissance to modern realism.

Peacock said his art degree, which helped lead to him negotiating projects with Expedition Comics, has been an invaluable asset.

"I see a lot of young kids trying to get into comics, but really you have to get an education first," Peacock said. "An educated artist is going to put out the best art. You have to do more than just draw. You have to know how to present your work. If you can't present your work, you won't get work." ■ **MC**

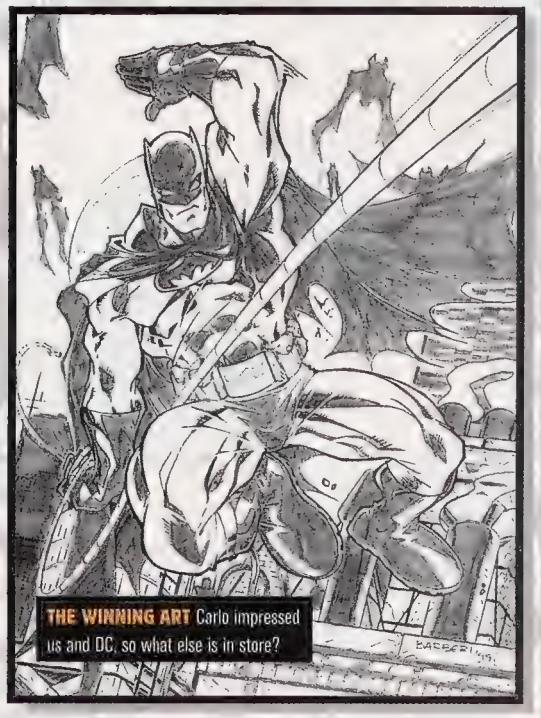
COLORFUL PEACOCK Ethan Peacock's work shows he drinks from a deep talent pool.

career with his own style.

"I really want to have my own style and I think people will see that I do," he said.

Although he submitted sketches of Thor and Batman for *Wizard*'s cover, Barberi admits he'd rather draw characters such as Robin and Impulse.

"I like to draw Superman and big heroes like him but I like to have characters who are having fun too," Barberi said. "So Impulse and Superboy are really my favorite to draw since they're always having fun. I think Young Justice would be a lot of fun to draw."



THE WINNING ART Carlo impressed us and DC, so what else is in store?

Barberi may soon get that chance. As part of his trip to *Wizard*'s Congers, N.Y.-based offices to celebrate his win, Barberi was whisked down to DC Comics in New York City to meet with Eddie Berganza, editor for *Young Justice*, *The Titans* and the Superman books. Berganza took time to look over some of Barberi's samples and offer pointers to the young artist.

"I'd like to see you work more on your backgrounds and make them as detailed as you do your characters," Berganza told Barberi. "I'd almost compare you to Humberto [Ramos] but I already see some growth here.

"I can really see you doing things like *Young Justice* with Superboy, Impulse and Robin. You have a fresh and young style and that's what I want to see more of in comics."

And more of Barberi's work is exactly what readers will be seeing in upcoming months—as promised, Berganza called a few weeks later with the news Barberi would pencil 22 pages of a *JLA Junior* special.

"I'm really excited," Barberi said. "I can't believe I'll get the chance to do this. Maybe it'll be my big break!" ■ **MIKE COTTON**

SUBMIT!

Want your art to appear in future issues of *Wizard*? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are non-returnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

HUH!? ALEX ROSS' PAINTED ASTRO CITY COVER FOR *WIZARD* #83 SET A RECORD FOR MOST CHARACTERS ON A *WIZARD* COVER: A WHOPPING 33!

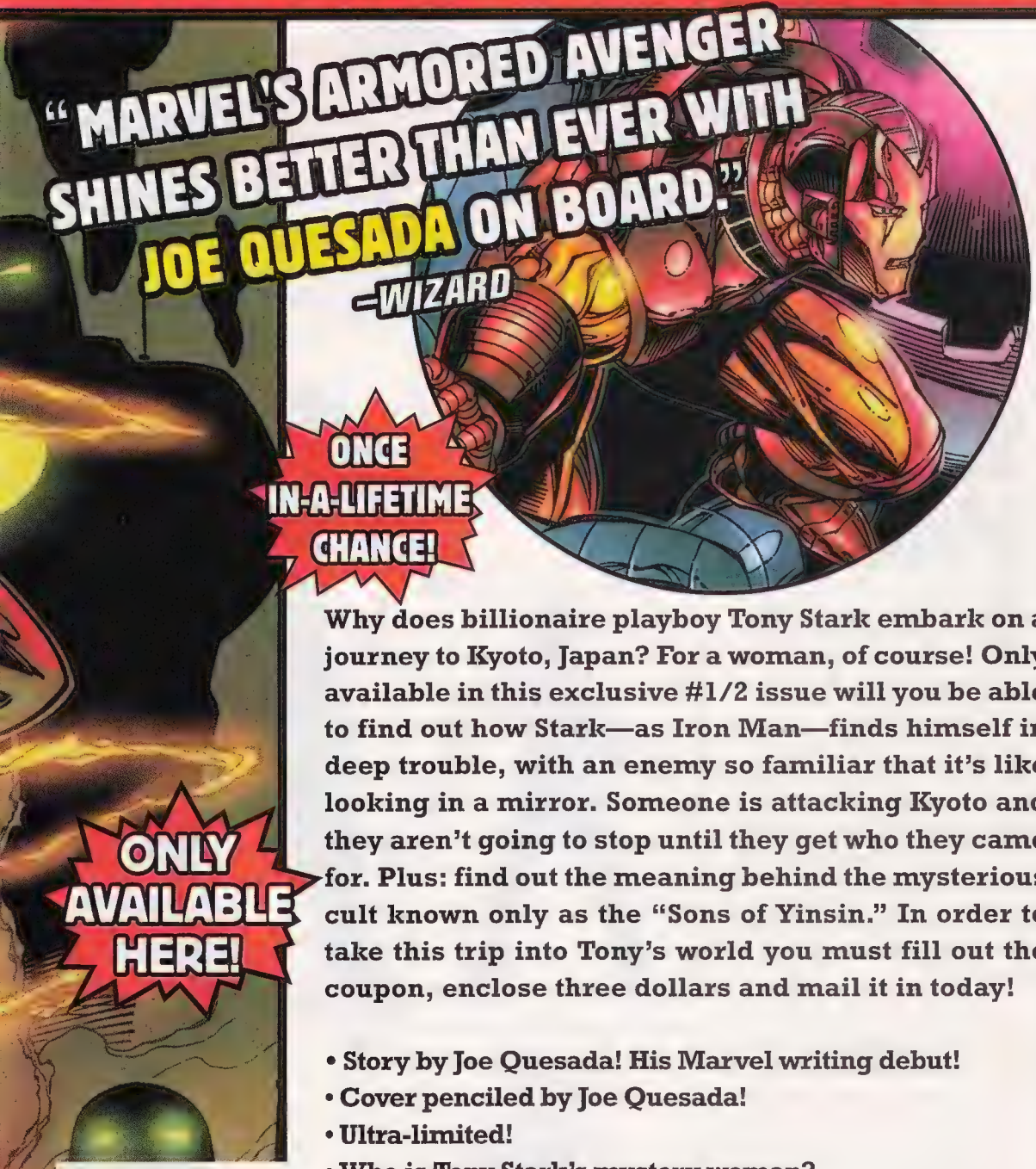
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

CENTURY 01.05.00
ERIC STEPHENSON
KERON GRANT
IAN CHURCHILL
ROB LIEFELD
THE FUTURE IS AWESOME

IRON MAN

MARVEL® COMICS

IRON MAN #1/2 OFFER



Why does billionaire playboy Tony Stark embark on a journey to Kyoto, Japan? For a woman, of course! Only available in this exclusive #1/2 issue will you be able to find out how Stark—as Iron Man—finds himself in deep trouble, with an enemy so familiar that it's like looking in a mirror. Someone is attacking Kyoto and they aren't going to stop until they get who they came for. Plus: find out the meaning behind the mysterious cult known only as the "Sons of Yinsin." In order to take this trip into Tony's world you must fill out the coupon, enclose three dollars and mail it in today!

- Story by Joe Quesada! His Marvel writing debut!
- Cover penciled by Joe Quesada!
- Ultra-limited!
- Who is Tony Stark's mystery woman?
- What is the meaning behind the "Sons of Yinsin"?

Wait too long, and you'll be outta luck! Once this offer expires, it's as gone as Iron Man's first suit of armor!

FILL OUT THE COUPON! NOW! DON'T DELAY!

LEGAL CIRCUIT

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. Even from Happy Hogan. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00 per copy, other foreign orders remit $6.00 per copy. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight to 12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Don't worry, Tony Stark himself is helping us out with this one. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by February 18, 2000.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES FEBRUARY 18, 2000

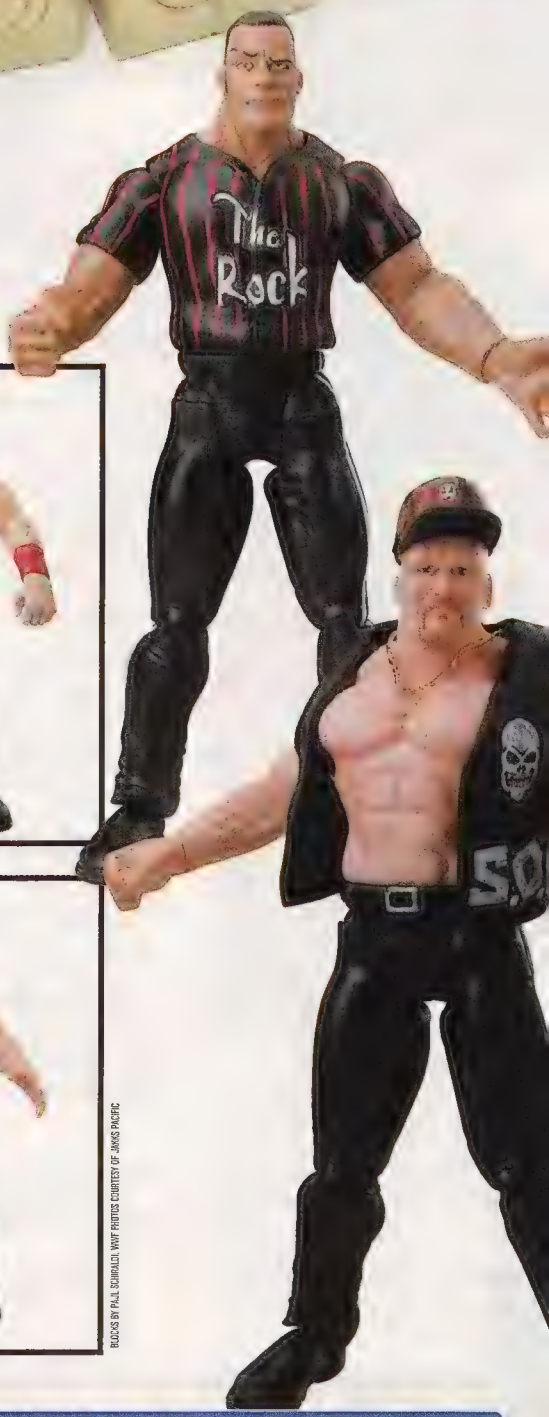
TOY CHEST

WRESTLING MADNESS!

Just like there's two big companies in the comic biz, there's two big rasslin' leagues out there. And that means two big toy lines from two of the biggest toy companies out there...

JAKKS Pacific is the place to go for all sorts of WWF action figure mayhem. And if plain ol' regular action figures just ain't your thing, JAKKS has got what you're looking for. Aside from sweating (yup, you read that right...sweating) action figures in its Maximum Sweat line, the company has unveiled a line of interactive action figures, Titan Tron Live.

The second series of these figures—just like the first wave—will interact with the special Titan Tron Live playset. Drop the figures in the set's entranceway, and you'll hear that wrestler's theme music. Cool! And to make these figures extra special, JAKKS Pacific will include a miniature WWF title belt, 20,000 of which will be 14-carat gold-plated. So pick up Stone Cold Steve Austin, The Rock, X-Pac, Ken Shamrock, The Big Show and Kane in early 2000 and strike some action figure gold.



SMACK DOWN! Grapple to your heart's content (without those messy groin pulls) with these figures from JAKKS Pacific. Clockwise (from top): The Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin, X-Pac and Kane.

BLOCKS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. WWF PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAKKS PACIFIC

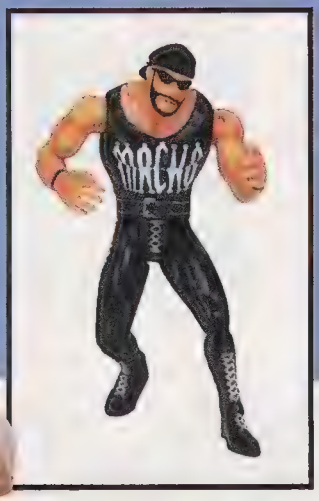
BY TOM PALMER JR.

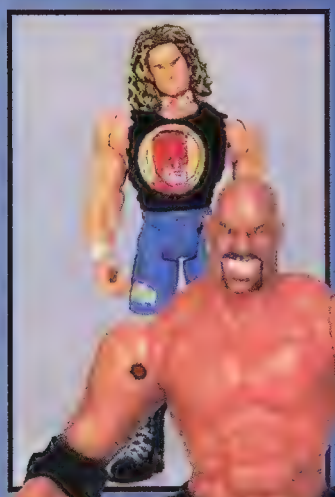
HUH!? TALK ABOUT MARVEL MANIA! THE HOUSE OF IDEAS HAS DOMINATED *WIZARD'S* COVERS, WITH ITS CHARACTERS APPEARING 81 TIMES. WHILE DC FINISHED SECOND, CLOCKING IN AT 43 COMPANY COVER APPEARANCES.

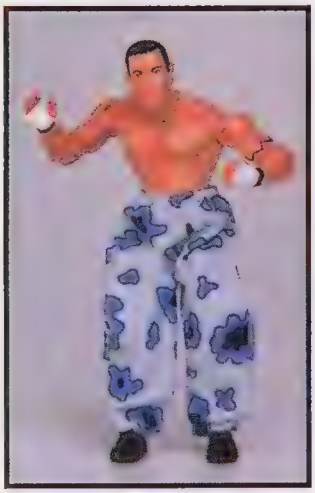
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

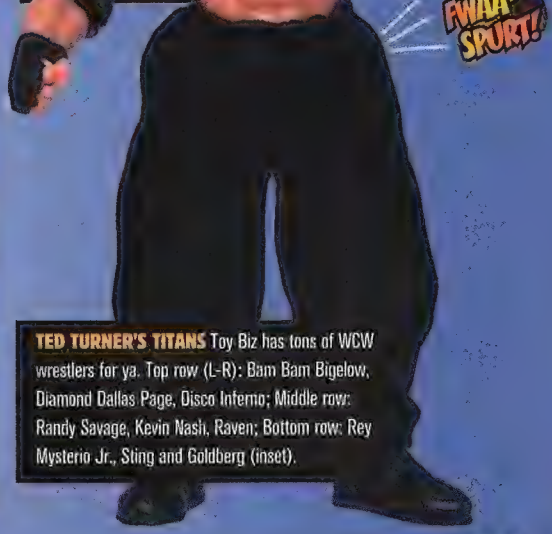
WCW THUNDERS ON

If the over-the-top mayhem of WWF is too much for ya, then check out Toy Biz's WCW toys, which feature some of the biggest names in wrestling history. From new superstars Sting and Goldberg to legends like Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage, Toy Biz has got the WCW covered! Don't believe us? Take a look at some of the latest Toy Biz has to offer: Bam Bam Bigelow, "Macho Man" Randy Savage, Kidman, Disco Inferno, Diamond Dallas Page, Rey Mysterio Jr., Kevin Nash, Raven and Goldberg. Whew!









TED TURNER'S TITANS Toy Biz has tons of WCW wrestlers for ya. Top row (L-R): Bam Bam Bigelow, Diamond Dallas Page, Disco Inferno; Middle row: Randy Savage, Kevin Nash, Raven; Bottom row: Rey Mysterio Jr., Sting and Goldberg (inset).

WCW PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOY BIZ

SHATTER THE SOUND BARRIER with these Sonic the Hedgehog toys.

HEDGE YOUR BETS

Speeding from video game consoles to stores everywhere, it's Sonic the Hedgehog! Woo-hoo!

ReSaurus is bringing the high-speed Sega mascot Sonic the Hedgehog to toy stores this November, along with his pals Knuckles and Tails. Each figure is 3 3/4-inches tall and comes with a sculpted base and ring accessories. And the line's rounded-out by an 11-inch boxed Sonic figure that talks and is only available at Toys R Us.

AWOOOOO!!!

He's a heavy metal legend. He's the poster child for every addiction out there. He's Ozzy Osbourne...and now he's a big plush doll.

Yup, Ozzy—inspired by his infamous "Wolfman" make-up from the cover of "Bark at the Moon,"—will be available as a cute n' cuddly doll. Sculpted by the design studio Art Asylum, this truly unique Ozzy collectible features sculpted head, arms and legs with a soft plush body. Look for this doll at Spencer Gifts stores everywhere by the end of the year.

BARK AT THE MOON True story: Ozzy once snorted a line of ants up his nose. Get the Dristan!

HOMEMADE HEROES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST OF FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

ALL-DIFFERENT, ALL-NEW X-MEN

Ricky Ross
Katy, Texas

Mutant scum or just cool toys? You decide. Ricky cobbled these guys together from all sorts of Toy Biz toys, with a few parts from Hasbro's Batman Animated figures and some excellent paint jobs. For all his effort, Ricky takes home a thunderous Thor mini-bust from those awesome folks at Bowen Designs. By the frosty beard of Ymir! That's cool!

Prize supplied by Bowen Designs. Thor lugs a big mallet.

Hey!

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG PHOTOS COURTESY OF RESAURUS; WOLFMAN OZZY OSBOURNE COURTESY OF ART ASYLUM; THOR COURTESY OF BOWEN DESIGNS

HUH!?

BEFORE IMAGE, WHILCE PORTACIO SENT OVER SOME SKETCHES OF CHARACTERS FOR HIS BOOK *WETWORKS*, WE ASKED HIM FOR A FEW COVER SKETCHES. DIDN'T LIKE THEM AND ENDED UP COMBINING ALL HIS SKETCHES INTO OUR FIRST GATEFOLD COVER: *WIZARD* #15.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

BEST of '99

THE 10 FIGURES WIZARD LOVES THE MOSTEST

10. WATTO
(Star Wars: Episode I–Hasbro)
Sure, he's blue and pudgy, but this here Watto toy perfectly captures the shifty used–parts dealer from "Episode I."

9. DR. EVIL
(Austin Powers–McFarlane Toys)
This is one frickin' nice looking toy. Throw in a special voice-chip base and it's almost like having your very own would-be-world conqueror.

8. SOLID SNAKE
(Metal Gear Solid–McFarlane Toys)
Accessories are the name of the game when it comes to this star of Metal Gear Solid.

7. DARTH MAUL II
(Star Wars: Episode I–Hasbro)
Oooo...scary! Darth Maul was the best thing about "Episode I" and he was also the best thing about Hasbro's Star Wars toys.

6. CROW
(Movie Maniacs–McFarlane Toys)
If you need proof that toys can be art, look no further. It's kinda eerie how well this toy captures the late Brandon Lee.

5. SYDNEY SAVAGE
(Danger Girl–McFarlane Toys)
Holy crap! This action figure makes us feel all tingly inside. Lotsa curves and lotsa tight leather. How can you go wrong?

4. MARV
(Sin City– McFarlane Toys)
Marv's probably the least likely guy to make it to toy stores. And you got your pick of gritty black-and-white or shiny, happy color.

3. HEADLESS HORSEMAN
(Sleepy Hollow– McFarlane Toys)
Heads rolled when this toy hit the scene, complete with a way cool diorama backdrop and big black horse.

2. MANDARIN SPAWN
(Spawn 14– McFarlane Toys)
Wowee! Lookit all them purty colors. Huh-huh. And he's got two honkin' swords. Huh. Cool.

1. SPACE GHOST
(Space Ghost–Toycom)

Spaaaaace Ghoooooost! This toy perfectly captures the essence of Space Ghost. Sit him down at his desk and you can have him interview all your other toys, a la "Space Ghost: Coast to Coast." And if you're a fan of his old '70s incarnation, he can fly around and kick ass.

ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIGALDI

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Reed Richards' Extra-Stretch Long Johns, Witchblade's Hand Cream or Batman's Herbal Mood Enhancer, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* strives to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies. In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

Bowen Designs presents a fully painted statue of the most ill-tempered but lovable member of the Fantastic Four, the Thing! "He's one of my all-time favorite characters," said sculptor Randy Bowen of the beloved Ben Grimm. "I thought he would be real fun to sculpt. My tag line for him is 'It's just the Thing for Christmas.'"

The first in a series of Fantastic Four resin statues, the Thing ($140) stands a whopping 12 inches tall and comes packaged in a full-color collector's box.

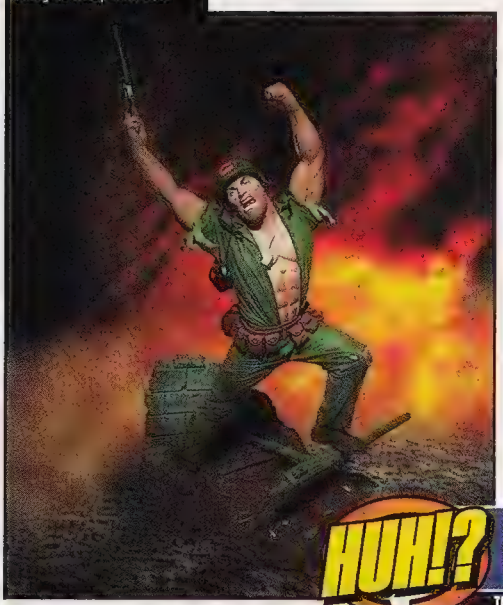
"I tried to make his stony texture look chunky and more angular, in an attempt to capture Kirby's original version of the character," Bowen said. "Other sculptures that I've seen, mine included, have made him look like a cobblestone road. I've tried to envision him as a dried-up river bed. He was deceptively difficult to sculpt, but I'm reasonably happy with the way he turned out."

Bowen says the plan for the FF line will see a different character released every two months. Look for the Invisible Woman (who appears to be disappearing!) next, followed by Mr. Fantastic and the Human Torch. And the bases of the statues can be fit together in any order collectors wish.

ROCK-N-ROLL The Thing will knock yer socks off (and most of your face, too)!

ROCK SOLID STATUE

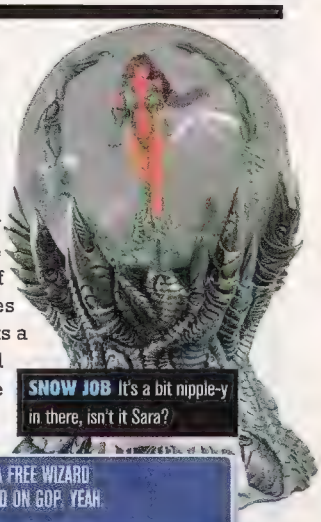
DC Comics brings you a statue of everyone's favorite WWII hero, Sgt. Rock! This fully painted Sgt. Rock Statue ($195) stands 11 1/2" tall and shows the unstoppable Sarge yelling to the members of Easy Company. Sculpted by Tim Bruckner, based on designs by Joe Kubert, this fully painted, cold-cast porcelain sculpture comes with a Kubert-autographed, one-color reproduction of the original design sketch and a certificate of authenticity. Look for it in stores April 26.



CHAARRGGE! Sgt. Rock's ready to whup Nazi ass.

SNOWED IN WITH WITCHBLADE

Moore Creations and Top Cow bring you the Witchblade Snow Globe ($139.50). Sculpted by Gabriel Marquez, this snow globe features Sara Pezzini in a globe of swirling green mist that measures over 10 inches high. The base sports a Witchblade nameplate. It's limited to just 3,000 editions and available in December.



SNOW JOB It's a bit nipple-y in there, isn't it Sara?

HUH!? RUNNING WITH THE POG CRAZE, *WIZARD* #25 INCLUDED A FREE WIZARD POG. EXCEPT WE COULDN'T CALL IT A POG, SO WE SETTLED ON GOP. YEAH. THAT'S "POG" BACKWARDS, GENIUSES. HUH?

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

ROSSSTUFF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

HERE'S HOW TO COVER THE HOLES IN YOUR WALLS

ROSS ROCKS CLASSIC MARVEL

This November, Dynamic Forces and Marvel Entertainment present two new painted lithographs by Alex Ross. The Avengers Classic Lithograph ($19.95, left) features original art by Ross of Captain America with the rest of the Avengers following him, while the Captain America Lithograph ($19.95) is a classic World War II picture of Cap in action that was painted by Ross over Jack Kirby pencils. Each full-color 18" X 24" litho comes on high-quality stock and is suitable for framing. You can also get a special edition of each print that comes signed by Ross ($39.95 each).

SUPER DC PORTRAITS

DC Comics presents the first two in a series of eight portraits by Alex Ross that feature classic Silver Age heroes. The Green Lantern Print ($7.95, right) and the Flash Print ($7.95) are painted portraits of Hal Jordan and Barry Allen on white backgrounds. Each print is 22" X 34" and are designed so that when all eight prints are available, they can be linked into one piece. Look for these two printed pals come February.

HOTSTUFF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

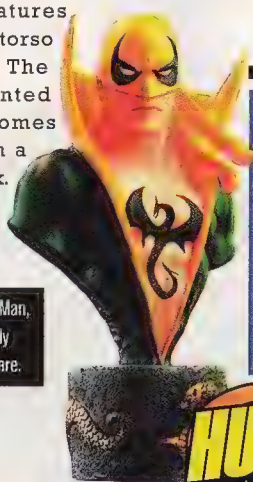
POWER OF THE FORCE

Don Post Studios present some amazing, albeit expensive, deluxe Star Wars replicas for your home. Look for the Imperial Stormtrooper replica ($5,800), which stands 6' tall and comes with 18 armor components and a blaster; the Boba Fett replica ($6,000), which is over 6' tall and comes with blaster, jet pack, and Wookie-scalps; the C3PO replica (a whopping $20,000), a 6' tall fiberglass replica that comes with light-eyes (plug included); and the R2D2 replica ($10,000), which is also made of fiberglass and stands about 4' tall and comes with a light-up dome (plug included). Each piece is an exact replica from the Lucasfilm archives. Look for them all right now or call Don Post Studios at 1-800-874-4087.

CHA-CHING! Use the Force and get out the plastic for this stuff.

HEART OF THE DRAGON

It's not unto a thing of iron, but it kicks butt just the same! The latest in a series of really cool mini-busts by Bowen Designs, look for the Iron Fist Mini-Bust ($35) to hit stores in December. Marvel's masked martial artist measures 5 1/2 inches tall and features his fist-less torso and head. The fully painted mini-bust comes packaged in a collector's box.



FIST OF FURY Man, Iron Fist can really deliver an iron stare.

DEFENSIVE TO A TEE

This December, show your support for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund with the CBLDF Frank Miller Splash T-Shirt ($20). The shirt features a sexy portrait (from the back cover of *Sin City: Hell and Back* #6) of a nekkid lady with her special areas barely covered. Now that's something to defend! It comes in blood red, snow white, or gold digger for sizes L-XXL.

CENSORSHIP SUCKS! Stupid well-placed banners.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

Stuff for "Stuff"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

HUH!? THE DOWNSTAIRS MEN'S ROOM REALLY IS AS SCARY AS IT SOUNDS. CONSIDER THE URINAL BEARD, THE PERSISTENT GHOST OF FLATULENCE PAST AND THE DEAD BUG SPLATTERED ON THE WALL...

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

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THE ULTIMATE MEGA-EVENT IS COMING

video STUFF

By Jerry Dorsey and the *Wizard* Staff

What? Do you need us to draw a picture? We took a bunch of video games, locked ourselves away and played 'em 'til our thumbs fell off. We don't pretend to be experts, just fun-lovin' folks who like our salsa spicy, our couch cushy and our video games kick-ass...here's what floated our boat, or not.

MARVEL GETS ACTIVE

Marvel Enterprises plans to avoid any future video game pitfalls. Activision recently announced a three-year exclusive licensing deal with Marvel to develop and publish an unlimited number of games based on the X-Men and Blade franchises.

The deal covers publishing rights for all player platforms, and also covers exclusive rights to develop products based on any future X-Men or Blade TV series or motion pictures. (Coincidentally, both properties are currently in production as feature films). The first X-Men game is the works right now, with no definite release date as of yet (although the "X-Men" movie is due out July 30, 2000. Coincidence?).

DOUBLE D'S ARE BIG

Get ready to blow up your N64.

Nintendo has also finally announced details on the release of the long-delayed 64DD, the disk drive system originally planned for release with the Nintendo 64. With an expected Japanese release in December (no details have yet been revealed regarding a U.S. release), the peripheral will allow the company to release expansion packs for current games, as well as develop new titles which will make use of the 64DD's significant storage ability.

The system comes with a modem cartridge for use with the N64, which may give the system a new life as a set-top Internet device. Nintendo plans to allow 64DD owners to download and play MP3 files, compete against other players online, and access special 64DD websites and other on-line content, in addition to standard Internet services like e-mail and web browsing.

A MIRACLE BRA ...will be needed to harness the power of the 64DD.

POKÉMON 2: ELECTRIC BOOGALOO

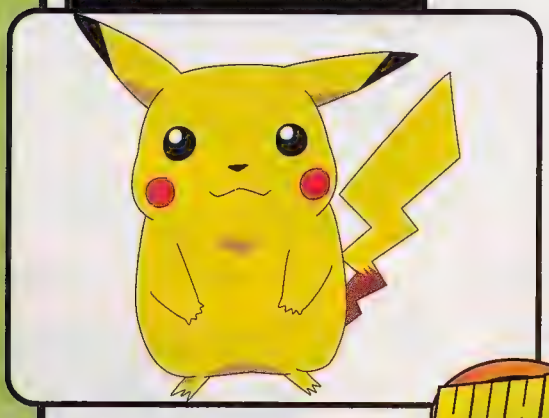
Pika, pika—2?

Set for holiday release in Japan (with a U.S. release to follow in fall of 2000) are the true sequels to the unbelievably popular Pokémon games for the Game Boy. *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver* will take full advantage of the abilities of the Game Boy Color. Also interesting is the fact that the games will require players to set an in-game clock, after which the games will progress in real time. This will make "catching 'em all" even more challenging, as some Pokémon will only be available during the daytime, and others only at night.

Expect over 200 different Pokémon, with at least 100 of these to be brand new for these versions.

Can chu dig it? ■

PRECIOUS PIKA The newest versions of Pokémon come in precious metal versions: Gold and Silver.



UP AHEAD

Wrasslin' Mayhem...Byte this...
Sharpen your skates...
Rip into *Spyro 2* and more!

HUH!? IN *WIZARD'S* 100-ISSUE HISTORY, WE'VE ONLY RUN THREE PHOTO COVERS: SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR AS BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER IN #92, MIKE MYERS AS AUSTIN POWERS IN #94, AND STING (THE WRESTLER, NOT THE AGING ROCK STAR) IN #97.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

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InterAct Astro Pad	$21.99	Nyko RF Adapter Switch	$5.99
InterAct AV Cable	$7.99	Nyko S-Video Cable	$8.99
InterAct Quantum Fighter Pad	$24.99	Pelican Extension Cable	$7.99
InterAct RFU Adapter	$9.99	Pelican RF Switch	$5.99
InterAct S-Video Cable	$7.99	Pelican S-Video Cable	$6.99

PSX Accessories

InterAct AC Cable	$3.99	Nyko Multi-Tap Adapter	$20.99
InterAct MultiPlayer Adpater	$18.99	Nyko Super Cobra Light Gun	$28.99
InterAct RFU Adapter	$7.99	Pelican 72x Memory Card	$32.99
Nyko AV Adapter	$6.99	Pelican Light Gun	$12.99
Nyko Classic Trackball	$29.99	Pelican S-Video Cable	$6.99
Nyko Extender Cable	$7.99	Pelican X-Wing Controller	$7.99

N64 Accessories

InterAct AC Cable	$12.99	Nyko Hyper Alpha 64	$29.99
InterAct Extension Cable	$7.99	Original Controller	$27.99
InterAct Tremor Pack	$6.99	Original Controller Pak	$11.99
Nyko AC Cable	$18.99	Pelican AV Cable	$7.99
Nyko Extender Cable	$7.99	Pelican Memory Card 256K	$7.99
Nyko Game Switch	$5.99	Pelican Super 64 Analog	$12.99

Game Boy Accessories

InterAct Game Shark	$21.99	Nyko Shock 'n Rock	$19.99
InterAct Mega Memory Card	$24.99	Pelican AC Adapter	$5.99
Nyko Pocket Vision	$6.99	Pelican Link Cable	$6.99
Nyko Power Grip	Call	Pelican Rechargeable	$7.99
Nyko Power Pak	$14.99	Battery	$24.99
Nyko PowerLink	$5.99	Pelican Survival Kit	

Game Boy Color

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Carmageddon	$23.99	R2R Boxing	$26.99
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Fighting Force 2	$34.99	Dewprism	$58.99
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Grandia	$34.99	Dragonball Z U22	$37.99
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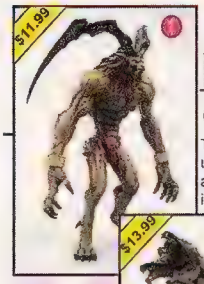

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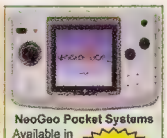

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PLATFORM: PlayStation & Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $49.99, available now

Electronic Arts scores a pin with its first wrestling venture. And even though *WCW Mayhem* doesn't sport the trademark EA Sports brand, the game shows every indication of enjoying the same thorough treatment EA gives to their "real" sports games.

One of the most amazing things about *Mayhem* is how much the wrestlers look like their real-life counterparts. From body type to facial features, each character is modeled *so* realistically, it's almost creepy. Even in motion these guys look surprisingly true-to-life: Each move is executed quickly and convincingly (although there does seem to be a bit of choppiness when switching between different moves).

But *Mayhem* truly excels in its television-style presentation: The game includes hysterical play-by-play courtesy of Gene Okerlund, Bobby Heenan and Tony Chiavone, who go so far as to insult the player if they appear to be relying too much on a limited selection of moves. The frequent camera cuts help emphasize the action, and the ability to take the action out of the arena and into the bathroom or infirmary provides endless entertainment.

Of course, the game also includes the now-standard Create-A-Wrestler option, and though this isn't as comprehensive as in *WWF Attitude*, it does include some nice features, such as the ability to create an invisible wrestler—or one that's only partly visible, which is downright disturbing! ■

TRY IT... If you grappled with *WWF Attitude* or *WCW/nWo Thunder*, step into the ring with *WCW Mayhem*.

newsBYTES...

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN? TRY...

Game Boy Advance should be out around Christmas of 2000, and does it ever live up to its name. Besides sporting a 32-bit processor that will display an impressive 65,000 colors, GBA will have the ability to connect to a cellular phone for true portable Internet connectivity...Monkey madness strikes again with the holiday release of ***Donkey Kong 64***. The game places everyone's favorite ape in a 3-D world that's nothing short of enormous, with eight giant levels featuring over 200 objectives. Look for a number of mini-games, ranging from the original arcade version of *Donkey Kong* to—get this—a deathmatch mode! It's Ape-tastic!

NHL 2000

MANUFACTURER: EA Sports
PLATFORM: PlayStation & PC
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99 (PC), $49.99 (PS), available now

Sport guru EA Sports makes a definite comeback with *NHL 2000*. Responding to complaints about the choppy, slow gameplay in last year's version, the designers have returned this year with a game so fast it almost hurts.

In fact, this may actually lead to the only real complaint about the game: For the exceptionally critical player, this ultra-quick stopping and starting may seem a bit unrealistic.

But that's about the only bad thing anyone can say about this exceptional game. As with every one of EA's recent sports titles, *NHL 2000* is designed with the hardcore fan in mind. The game features an in-depth franchise mode, including an expansion draft (which its major competitor, 989 Sports' *NHL FaceOff 2000*, lacks), as well as industry standards like a tournament mode.

And *NHL 2000* has really nailed the presentation this year: Play-by-play commentary, on-screen displays and other television-style features are spot-on, and the game really manages to capture the atmosphere of high-tension hockey. Look for a Big Hit button that helps turn checks into something extra-special for your hapless opponent. Of course, the game also includes the ability to throw down the gloves and slug it out and you even have the option of adjusting how frequently your players will get into fights.

For the discriminating hockey fan, *NHL 2000* is easily the best choice. ■

CHECK IT OUT But make sure your cup is on; those hockey guys play dirty.

TRY IT... If either *NHL '99* or *NHL FaceOff '99* was your thing, you owe it to yourself to pick up *NHL 2000*.

HUH!? *WIZARD'S* MUCH-BELOVED LETTER COLUMN, "MAGIC WORDS," DIDN'T ACTUALLY APPEAR UNTIL ISSUE #6. FROM THAT POINT ON, READERS HAD EASY ACCESS TO A FEDERALLY-APPROVED MONTHLY SUPPLY OF SARCASM.
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

SPYRO 2: RIPTO'S RAGE!

MANUFACTURER: Sony Computer Entertainment America
PLATFORM: PlayStation
AVAILABILITY: $49.99, November

Spyro soars high the second time around. The first *Spyro the Dragon* was hailed as a great-looking 3-D platform game for all ages, perhaps the first PlayStation game to seriously rival Nintendo's *Mario 64*. But many critics complained that the game was too simple for the veteran gamer.

The designers at Insomniac Games took these criticisms to heart when they began work on *Spyro 2*, and the result is a game that manages to be every bit as engaging as the original while offering a far more significant challenge for the more experienced player.

The secret is variety: The game includes several mini-missions to choose from on each level, so players can pick their challenges depending on their own skill. And the fact that *Spyro 2* looks every bit as beautiful as the original, and is every bit as easy to control, makes going through these missions enjoyable for all, even though the game occasionally offers up seemingly impossible challenges.

TRY IT... Try it: If you or someone you love enjoyed *Mario* 64 or either *Croc* game, take *Spyro 2* out for a spin.

Still, *Spyro 2* isn't the most difficult 3-D platform adventure out there, but it'll offer a satisfactory challenge for experienced gamers, and serves as a great way to encourage new players to try for 100 percent completion. It's well worth a look for anyone who thinks they don't like platform games. ■

SIMPLY SPYRO Not anymore: Spyro's no sissy his second time around.

CHEATSHEET webline

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

CODES BY THE PODFUL

Check out these nifty codes for the Nintendo 64 version of *Star Wars: Episode I Racer*. Note: In order for these codes to work, you'll need to start with an empty file on the Select Player Screen. Hold down the Z (trigger) button while scrolling through the letters with the analog stick; then select each letter by hitting the L button. Finally, select "End" with the L button.

•**Dual-Controller Cheat**: Pod racing as it was meant to be! With this code entered, you'll be steering your pods with a controller in each hand, recreating as closely as possible the control scheme from the film. Start with an empty file on the Select Player Screen. Hold down the Z (trigger) button while scrolling through the letters with the analog stick. Enter RRDUAL, selecting each letter by hitting the L button. Finally, select "End" with the L button.

Now, Player One steers his racer with the controllers in ports one and three, while Player Two uses the controllers in two and four.

•Cheat Menu: Pause after starting a race, and then press Left, Down, Right, Up on the digital pad. This will open up various cheats, including Invincibility, Mirror Mode and Enemy Racer Speed.

Ultimate Turok Cheats: Here's how to open up the mother lode of cheats in Turok 1 and 2 for the N64.

•*Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*: Go to the Enter Cheat option at the title screen and enter NTHGTHDGDCRTDTRK. This will give you access to invincibility, all weapons, full ammo, big heads, and lots of level warps.

•*Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*: Go to the Enter Cheat option at the title screen and enter BEWAREOBLIVIONISATHAND. In addition to similar cheats to Turok 1, you'll be able to play with the game's graphic modes, including dressing up all the characters in goofy, colorful outfits. Hysterical!

www.nintendo.com/gb/

The official home page of the Game Boy. If you want to get a feeling for the ridiculous number of games available for this eminently portable system, check out this site.

www.wcw.com

Snap in to it! The official site of the WCW features passcodes which allow owners of *WCW Mayhem* to "download" real pay-per-view events so you can battle in the same arenas as your favorite wrestlers. Inputting these codes will automatically set up the different matches for the event, allowing players to control the outcome on their own.

www.snopes.com

Did you hear the story about the guy who sent his wife her lover's severed head? What about the one where a honeymooning couple finds a corpse in the box spring of their bed? Check out the origins of these and other urban legends at the Urban Legends Reference Page. The truth may surprise you!

www.thesmokinggun.com

If the FBI site has whet your whistle for memo voyeurism, check out The Smoking Gun. Every week, TSG posts a new series of titillating documents obtained through requests made possible by the Freedom of Information Act. They even have a theme song, courtesy of alternative music heroes They Might Be Giants! And no, we still don't know who killed Kennedy, but we know it wasn't us. So leave us alone.

"Lain" received the EXCELLENCE PRIZE of the 1998 MEDIA ART FESTIVAL by the AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS in Japan. "This work follows a Junior High School girl, Iain, as she explores the often fuzzy borders between the wired and the real worlds. We were impressed with its willingness to question the meaning of contemporary life as it depicted the development of the computer and the ways in which real people live. Much of the content is very down-to-earth school friendships and family relations - but the questions this work asks are extremely philosophical and deep."

- MEDIA ART FESTIVAL BY AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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www.pioneeranimation.com

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Is This the End of Tenchi?!

TENCHI FOREVER

- Tenchi can wait 2

Also known in Japan as Tenchi in Love 2, this beautifully animated feature has officially been declared the last Tenchi Muyo in the Tenchi Universe continuity. Don't miss this stunning farewell to the Tenchi Franchise!

English VHS	[illegible]
Subtitled VHS	[illegible]
Dual Language DVD	[illegible]

Available in October 1999

Battle Athletes Victory - Willpower V.6	DVD	$29.98
Battle Athletes Victory - The Human Race V.8	VHS Dub	$24.98
Battle Athletes Victory - The Human Race V.8	VHS Sub	$29.98
Dog of Flanders, The	DVD	$29.98
Dog of Flanders, The	VHS Dub	$19.98
Dragon Ball Z V.12 - Betrayal	DVD	$24.98
Dragon Ball Z V.13 - Collision	DVD	$24.98
Lain - Deus V.3	DVD	$29.98
Lain - Deus V.3	VHS Dub	$24.98
Lain - Deus V.3	VHS Sub	$29.98
Tenchi in Tokyo - A New Challenge V.6	DVD	$29.98
Tenchi in Tokyo - A New Career V.7	VHS Dub	$24.98
Tenchi in Tokyo - A New Career V.7	VHS Sub	$29.98

Available in Novemeber 1999

Battle Athletes Victory - The Last Dance V.7	DVD	$29.98
Dragon Ball Z V.14 - Quest	DVD	$24.98
Dragon Ball Z V.15 - Trouble	DVD	$24.98
E.H. Alternative World - Ruler of the Universe V.3	DVD	$29.98
E.H. Alternative World - Ruler of the Universe V.3	VHS Dub	$24.98
E.H. Alternative World - Ruler of the Universe V.3	VHS Sub	$29.98
El Hazard OVA Box 1	DVD	$69.98
Fushigi Yugi Box 1	DVD	$198.98
Fushigi Yugi - The Seiryu Seven V.9	VHS Dub	$24.98
Fushigi Yugi - The Seiryu Seven V9	VHS Sub	$29.98
Lain - Reset V.4	DVD	$29.98
Lain - Reset V.4	VHS Dub	$24.98
Lain - Reset V.4	VHS Sub	$29.98
Miffy V.1	VHS Dub	$12.98
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Pokemon Gift Box 2 (Vol. 4-6)	VHS Dub	$14.98
Pokemon - The Great Race V.11	DVD	$24.98
Pokemon - The Great Race V.11	VHS Dub	$14.98
Pokemon - Pikachu Party V.12	DVD	$24.98
Pokemon - Pikachu Party V.12	VHS Dub	$14.98
Tenchi in Tokyo - A New Career V.7	DVD	$29.98
Tenchi in Tokyo - A New Ending V.8	VHS Dub	$24.98
Tenchi in Tokyo - A New Ending V.8	VHS Sub	$29.98

Makoto and Friends are back to wreck havoc on a brand new world!

El Hazard

- The Alternative World

This series is the 13 episode sequel to the original El Hazard OVA Series that was expanded last summer with the release of El Hazard 2. We first meet Qawoor, the new, bug-phobic Priestess of Water, but before the sucession ceremony can be completed, a strange artifact sends Makoto and his friends into another alternative universe! Can Makoto solve the mystery in time to send them all home?

The Priestess of Water (V.1)	Available now
The Spring of Life (V.2)	Available in September
Ruler of the Universe (V.3)	Available in November
Dreams of Tomorrow (V.4)	Available in [illegible]

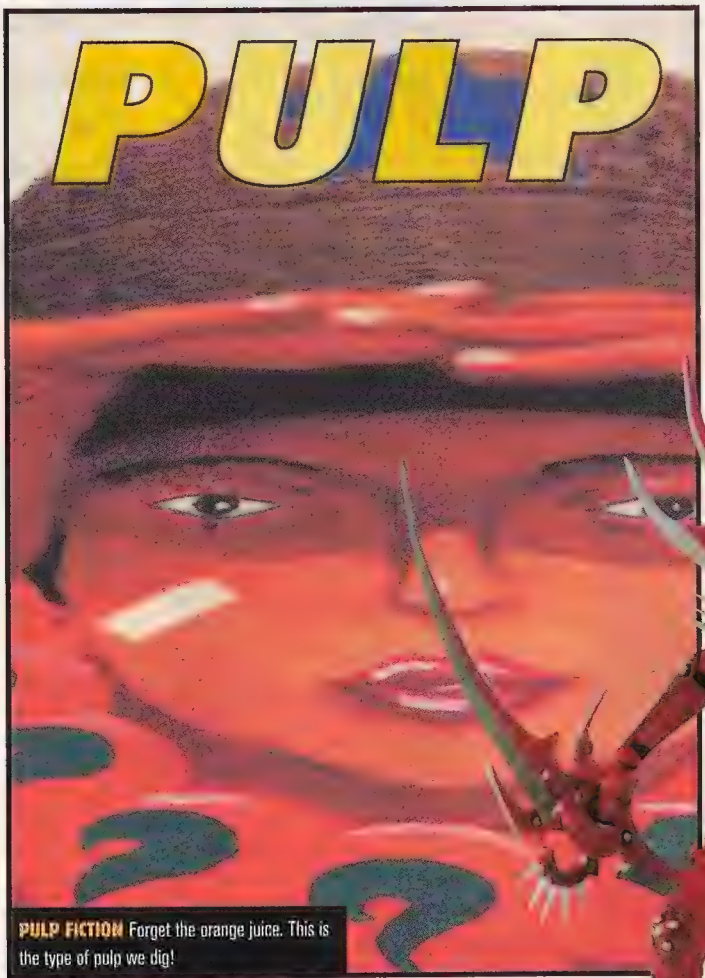
English VHS	[illegible]
Subtitled VHS	[illegible]
Dual Language DVD	[illegible]

manga MANIA!

COOL JAPANESE COMIC AND ANIMATION STUFF YOU'LL WANT TO BUY...

Ahh, November-shipping Japanese imports. Who says there's nothing to be thankful for these days? You can scarf down turkey, potatoes and pumpkin pie, then hunker down with a big pile of manga and anime and zone out to your heart's content. That's what this country is all about. Anyway, all manga featured here is in black and white unless we say otherwise. Now grab your fork and get scarfin'!

BY TOM ROOT



PULP FICTION Forget the orange juice. This is the type of pulp we dig!

PULP GOES THE WEASEL

Viz's *Pulp* manga anthology gets an overhaul with *Pulp Volume 4* #1. That means a new editorial staff, new columns and a new selection of some of the coolest, most subversive manga being translated into English today. The new crop includes *Banana Fish, Bakune Young, Strain, Dance Till Tomorrow, Heartbroken Angels* and the always enjoyable (and perverted) *Voyeurs Inc.* It's 128 pages for $5.95. What are you waiting for, a coupon? Go get it!

ROAD RAGE

Do NOT tick off Over Rage Guillotinna! Why, you ask? Check out the gigantic blades in each of her hands to figure out why. Anyhoo, this Guillotinna stands 9 inches high on her diorama base (conveniently littered with severed noggins!) and will cost $18.95 retail. Some heads are gonna roll!

"ARRGGGHHH!!" If Guillotinna's that ticked off, she should try a sedative.

FLYING WESTWARD TO YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

manga MANIA!

BANANARAMA

Nothing spells intrigue like the words "Banana Fish." What the hell is a Banana Fish? It's the name of a mysterious new drug, and it leads to a game of cat-and-mouse between gang members, the NYPD and two Japanese journalists that stretches from Vietnam to Japan to the United States! Get in on the action with *Banana Fish: Volume 3* in graphic novel form. This Viz publication is 192 pages and runs $15.95. Banana Fish tastes like chicken.

USE TWO HANDS Banana Fish are notoriously slippery.

MARS NEEDS...WOMEN? But they're just friends. Honest.

MARS ATTACKS!

Everyone's got their favorite Sailor Scout from the hit manga/anime/toy line/tongue-piercing kit series *Sailor Moon*. We hereby declare that Sailor Mars, known to friends and family as Raye, the Shinto priestess, is *Wizard*'s favorite Sailor Scout. Which is fortuitous, considering Mixx Entertainment is releasing *Sailor Moon Scout Guide Meets Sailor Mars: Fire* this month, compiling 96 pages of full-color cool info on the often-bratty Mars for a mere $12.96. And all you Sailor Mercury fans can go to hell, got it?

LODOSS DOSSIER

First we're going to give you the title of this anime, which is long, then a summary, which is short. "Record of Lodoss War: Chronicles of the Heroic Knight Volume 4: The Black Knight Videos" is the name of this 90-minute video from Central Park Media. The plot? Spark and his band must stop an evil wizard from stealing "The Staff of Life." Got it? Then get it for $19.99 dubbed, $24.99 subtitled.

EYE SPY "Of course I see well; my eyes are bigger'n satellite dishes."

HUH!? BEFORE WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO, THERE WAS COMICFEST. *WIZARD* WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THIS 1993 MEGA COMIC CONVENTION IN PHILADELPHIA—THE CITY'S FIRST AND LAST BIG SHOW.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

AVERAGE JOE? Not likely, as Crusher Joe fights all sorts of Japanese nastiness. Like sushi.

HAVE A CRUSH

In the future, men and women who tackle the tough space missions are known as "Crushers." But we're only worried about one Crusher in particular—Crusher Joe, who battled all sorts of wacky things like ghost ships,politiciansand time-traveling rebels in this *Crusher Joe* trade paperbackfrom Studio Ironcat. Pick up Haruka Takachiho's best-selling, 192-page sci-fi slamfest for $15.95.

HEART TO HEART

Viz's *Pulp* anthology is best known for...well, for all sorts of highly entertaining depravity. But *Heartbroken Angels*, featured in *Pulp* and now collected as a graphic novel, is one of the anthology's few series where the name of the game is comedy. *Angels*, by Masahiko Kikuni, gives a skewed take on everything from religion to sex to death, and you can take it home for a mere $15.95 thanks to the folks at Viz. If you have sex in church and get crushed by a falling pipe organ, that would hit all three of those topics, wouldn't it?

GET A TISSUE Does a girl this age need to eat boogers?

manga MANIA!

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET...CLOW!

Those stupid Clow Cards! They're on the loose, thanks to their guardian being asleep at the switch, and now they threaten to wreak havoc on the entire world! Good thing fourth-grader Sakura is there to join the hunt for those crazy, nutty, cuckoo Clow Cards! *Cardcaptor Sakura* #1 is another fine product from Clamp, the all-girl superteam responsible for *Magic Knight Rayearth*, and you can pick up this 48-page manga for $2.95 from Mixx. Did we mention the Clow Cards are crazy, nutty and cuckoo?

CLAMP DOWN on this ultra-hot manga from an all-female creative team.

ENDLESS KNIGHTS

Dig that super funky-cool "Slayers" series? Then odds are pretty good you'll dig the "Knights of Ramune Volume 3: Endless Legend" anime (and probably even volumes 1 and 2, now that we think about it) because it was penned by one of the "Slayers" writers! Parfait, Cacao and Lemon ("Slayers" writers have a really weird sense of humor) must stop the legendary Mystic Knight robot from doing some serious stomp-ass! It's 60 minutes, it's from Central Park Media, and you can get it dubbed for $24.99 and subtitled for $29.99. Parfait?

WHO FARTED? Take a guess. She's the one laughing.

HOT IMPORT!!

THE COOLEST, BESTEST THING COMING ACROSS THE OCEAN

SLIPPERY SLOPE Ajari finds the footing treacherous atop severed, bloody heads.

SCARY AJARI

From the demented mind of director Keita Amemiya ("Moon of Tao"), the nimble fingers of Takayuki Takeya and the fine folks at Fewture Models comes this horrifying Ajari statue. Ajari, star of Amemiya's comic *Red Mausoleum*, stands almost 10 inches tall on a severed head base, and will set buyers back $148.00. Not bad for a lifetime of guaranteed nightmares!

YO! Are you a company who sells manga and anime stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

Manga Mania
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

HUH!? THE VERY FIRST *DARK BOOK* (WITH A KILLER PAINTED CARNAGE COVER BY NELSON!) WAS NUMBER 1 IN AN "EXCITING NEW LINE OF WIZARD PRESS SPECIAL EDITIONS" DUBBED THE COLLECTOR'S LIBRARY SERIES. WE'RE STILL WAITING FOR #2.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

HAVE YOU GOT THE BALLZ ?

SAILOR & the 7

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sales@animemailorder.com

MMG

TOP 10

That particular story you're readin' right now sound a bit...familiar? Getting a sense of...*déjà vu*? It's probably because the plot's been retreaded more times than a wasteland of used tires. Here, for your viewing pleasure, are THE TOP 10 MOST.....

OVERUSED COMIC BOOK PLOTLINES!

1 SPIDEY QUITS

We're not just talking about that nightmarish Spider-Clone thing, either. For one of America's most enduring superheroes, Spider-Man sure has a tendency to quit a lot. In fact, Spidey's hung up the tights more than any other superhero we can think of. What's his deal? All you have to do to make Spidey quit is trip his Aunt May down the stairs, or print a negative story about him in the *Daily Bugle*. Like back in *Amazing Spider-Man* (vol. 1) #18 an #50. And remember the recent Byrne/ Mackie reboot? Er, actually, that'd be enough to make anyone quit. Forget we said anything.

2 ALTERNATE X-FUTURES

If we were the X-Men, we'd find a nice, peaceful set of railroad tracks, lie down and wait for sweet, sweet oblivion. Because in any one of their 865 alternate futures shown to readers, the X-Men get the short end of the frig-gin' stick. Either they've all been wiped out by an evil overlord and they must form a small band of rene-gades in order to save the world, or...hey, wait a minute, that's the plot of *every* X-future. Come to think of it, that's the plot of "The Matrix," too. Come to think of it, that's the plot for 85 percent of all fiction. What a rip-off.

3 DEAD CAN DANCE

In comics, death is actually something you should look forward to. Why? Because every time someone dies, they come back feeling completely rested and invigorated. It's like a vacation. Jean Grey, the Green Goblin, Hal Jordan, Aunt May, Superman...face it, in comics, you haven't lived 'til you've died. As a matter of fact, flip through our handy-dandy *Wizard* price guide and point to a listing at random. We guarantee you'll land on something like *Green Lantern* #198: "Hal returns as GL, D: Tomar-Re...3.00." Hmm...as a matter of fact, that brings us to...

4 ONE TRUE GREEN LANTERN

For some reason, Hal Jordan can only manage to spend about six weeks at a time as Green Lantern before he quits, gets fired, gets banished, or, y'know...dies. But he's a lot like the Cat in the proverbial Hat: He's always making a triumphant return. Just check out 1998's "Emerald Knights" storyarc for recent proof. Anyway, what's so tough about being Green Lantern? Next time Hal becomes GL again, which should be...oh, we don't know...April or so, he should just relax and try not to go insane and blow up any cities. He should be able to manage that.

HUH!? SOME 349 HEROES HAVE APPEARED ON *WIZARD'S* COVERS, BUT NONE MORE OFTEN THAN SPIDER-MAN AND WOLVERINE WHO EACH GRACED OUR FRONT PAGE 14 TIMES. THE RUN-NERS-UP? BATMAN (13 APPEARANCES), SUPERMAN (12) AND SPAWN (8)

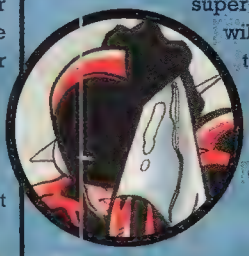
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

5 BATMAN BROODS

If it's a Tuesday, that must mean Batman is turning darker and more introverted again. "Get away from me, Robin!" he'll cry. "I don't need a partner! I don't want a partner! This life is too dangerous for you! I am the terror that quacks in the night!" Then eventually Robin or Alfred or whoever shows Batman how important it is to have people who care about you, and he becomes a stronger Batman for coming to that conclusion. Sometimes Batman is so bogus. We'd tell him that, too, except he's being so dark and brooding lately...

6 WALLY WEST, MARTYR

At least Uncle Barry stayed dead. Wally West, on the other hand, tends to sacrifice himself at the end of every single storyarc. "One side, Jay! I've *got* to do this! To save humanity, I'll sacrifice myself...to the *Speed Force*!" We're not super-speedsters or anything, but we're willing to bet the Speed Force is really this great beach where they serve you drinks with umbrellas in them. Because Wally sure doesn't mind blinking out of existence to go there on a regular basis.



7 SPAWN BLUES

Poor Spawn! All he wants is to be human again, talk to his wife and find out who killed him. Well, he's wanted the *same damn thing* for *90 friggin' issues*! It's high time Spawn moved on with his life. There're plenty of options available to a Hellspawn who looks like a walking barbecue spit. He could work the night shift at 7-Eleven, for one thing. That shift doesn't attract the most beautiful people. There you go, Spawn. Now stop bitching.

8 CONFUSED CAP

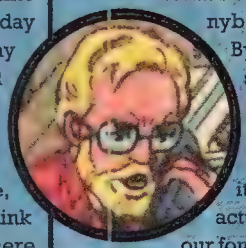
Captain America is a national treasure, the living embodiment of everything the United States stands for. But what if...gasp!...Cap was to *lose faith in America*? And then he had to *find his faith again*? That'd make for one hell-za-poppin' *Captain America* comic book story, huh? That'd bring the house down, eh? Judge for yourself by picking up any one of the 167 *Captain America* issues in which that stupid plot gets rehashed. On second thought, don't.

9 WOLVIE BRAIN FARTS

Back when the Weapon X program implanted Wolverine with all those false memories, it probably took, what, a day at most? They were pretty advanced back then. Let's say a day. Well, that one day of work has resulted in years worth of annoying Wolverine plots. Just once, can't Wolvie walk into a corner store and buy a six-pack without being assailed by all those terrible, bad, nasty memory implants? You'd think by now Professor X would've gone in there and fixed things.

10 BYRNE, BABY, BYRNE

What's a good way to tell you're reading a funnybook story penned by the mighty John Byrne? No...not when someone takes a steaming-hot whiz on 30 years of Spider-Man continuity. When you see Byrne himself in the issue! He's popped up in *She-Hulk*, *Fantastic Four*, *Hulk*, you name it. It's almost as if his fondest wish was to actually *be* a comic book character. Well, our fondest wish in the world is to join the cast of "Baywatch: Hawaii," but it ain't happenin'.

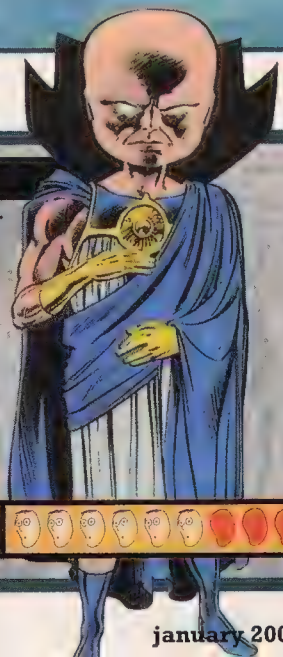


MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

UATU, THE WATCHER

The Watchers watch. That's all they're allowed to do. They cruise the universe, watching things. They're not allowed to interfere. Not ever. Not ever, ever, ever. That's the Watcher Code. So why the *hell* does *our* region's Watcher, Uatu, interfere *every single time* he shows up in the Marvel Universe? Doesn't anyone police this guy? Don't the other Watchers review Uatu's log and see things like "June 4: Watched the heroes fight Magneto. Felt compelled to interfere. Promise not to interfere again—Uatu"? Someone needs his ass *fired*.



MORTOMETER

picks

THE BIG BUZZ COMICS SHIPPING IN DECEMBER

booksofthemonth

PICK OF THE LITTER

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Cataclysmic! The Bat-books year-long "No Man's Land" storyarc finally ends, and writer Greg Rucka promises it'll be "A flawless ending to a year-long storyline, the likes of which the comics industry has never seen." Here's how it breaks down: *Legends of the Dark Knight* #126 (shipping Dec. 1), *Batman* #574 (Dec. 8), and *Detective Comics* #741 (Dec. 5) contain the three-part "Endgame," where the Bat-crew finally face the Joker. And in *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #94 (Dec. 22, the last issue of that title), Batman pays tribute to the person who sacrificed his life (Ulp!) to save Gotham. By a bunch of very tired creators. **$1.99 each; $2.50—*Detective***

ANT-MAN'S BIG CHRISTMAS

MARVEL Ant-Man's always been a pretty lame superguy. Oooo, lookit how small he is! Frightening! About the only thing he's really good for is to help push a colon blockage out. The guy would make an excellent proctologist. Or friend of Richard Gere. Anyway, in this Holiday special, Ant-Man (Hank Pym) and the Wasp accept an invite from a little kid to help smooth out his family get-together. All sorts of wackiness ensues. By Bob Gale (he wrote "Back to the Future!") and Phil Winslade. **$5.95** (Dec. 1)

AVENGERS #25

MARVEL The deity-resembling Exemplars are gonna put the Juggernaut on trial. Earth's Mightiest will try to put the kibosh on things, but unfortunately, there are seven more Juggs where Cain Marko came from. Sounds like a tall order, and it's probably why one Avenger quits before the end of this issue. "It will have immediate and major repercussions on the team," reveals writer Kurt Busiek. Any hints? "It's somebody who's on the current roster!" Hey, don't spoil it for us, Kurt. So, uh, what're the colors on his uniform? "His?" Darn. Almost had him. By Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$2.99** (Dec. 29)

BATMAN: DARK VICTORY #3 (OF 13)

DC COMICS Forget Pokémon. Forget Talking Urkel. The hottest toy in Gotham this season is sure to be the "Fear Doll," produced by the Scarecrow. Sounds innocent enough, right? But Batman is suspicious, and besides contending with evil playthings, he's also got to keep up the pursuit of the Holiday killer. Sweet honey ham on rye, doesn't this guy ever get a break? By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. **$2.95** (Dec. 15)

BLAIR WHICH?

DARK HORSE Why anyone would want to go out trekking into the woods is beyond us. It's cold, dirty and some inbred rednecks there might ask you to help them re-enact "Deliverance." Instead, check out this parody of the pretty-darn-spooky "Blair Witch Project" by the *Groo* team of Mark Evanier and Sergio Aragonés. "We show what really happened in this town," explains Evanier. "We have managed to achieve something amazing here in that we have a comic book where even less happens than in the movie. We

HUH!? A FEW COLUMNS FROM *WIZARD'S* EARLY DAYS STILL EXIST: MARKET WATCH ("WIZARD'S COMIC WATCH" AT THE TIME), MAKING THE GRADE ("GRADING YOUR COMICS"), SHOWS AND CONS ("SHOW AND CONVENTION CALENDAR") AND PICKS ("PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT").
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

have put in even less plot and coherence." No small feat. By Evanier and Aragonés. **$2.95** (Dec. 15)

CAPTAIN AMERICA #26

MARVEL Don't you just hate when you're chained to a missile that has enough anthrax to kill 50 percent of the world's population? The Falcon does, but there's not a whole lot he can do about it. Same goes for Cap, who has his own problems: he's strapped down and about ready to drown. In his own self-righteousness? No, silly! Probably in some deadly water tank, or something. By Dan Jurgens, Andy Kubert and Dan Green. **$1.99** (Dec. 15)

CAPTAIN MARVEL #2

MARVEL What would happen if you had Captain America and Captain Marvel as part of the same cruise ship staff? Would they fight about who the "real" Captain is? Can either one of them even steer a ship? Sheesh. Onto more important matters: Since Peter David is writing this series, the Hulk makes his requisite appearance. We don't think the Captain issue is touched upon. By David, Chriscross and Anibal Rodriguez. **$2.99** (Dec. 1)

DAREDEVIL #12

MARVEL Larry's a stoolie, a rat, a fink. He can put the Kingpin away for many years to come. So Daredevil wants to find him. "There's never really been a detailed origin of the Kingpin, a detailed look into his psychology or background," explains writer David Mack. "This issue does that in a pretty effective way." Larry's already after Wilson Fisk; he may take justice into his own hands. And it's not helping that Echo is keeping DD busy by throttling the hell out of him. Gee...chasing after criminals and getting a beat down. Sounds like a typical lawyer's day to us. By David Mack, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50** (Dec. 29)

EARTH X #11 (OF 12)

MARVEL It's the Skull versus damn near everyone in this issue. "The Skull has no brain in his head. He's a kid," says plotter/cover artist Alex Ross. "That's probably the greatest pity of the character. We worked up the characterization of the Skull as kind of a commentary on the worst part of the comic-book reading demographic. The young, 14-20-year-old reader who is just absorbed in the fighting, the heavy action, the sex." Yeah? Wanna make something of it? Also: Wolverine battles...Jean Grey? By Ross, Jim Krueger, John Paul Leon and Bill Reinhold. **$2.99** (Dec. 22)

FANTASTIC FOUR #26

MARVEL Seems as if Doc Doom laid waste to Reed Richards in last month's installment of *FF*. (You believe that, right? We're sure.) What's next for Doom and his massive ego? Why, offing the remaining three members of Reed's troupe, of course. Up in the air is the loyalty of Valeria Von Doom: Will she side with ol' Dad or the good guys? By Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert. **$1.99** (Dec. 1)

GREEN LANTERN #121

DC COMICS Kyle's a married man? You betcha, and the lucky lady is Jade. Only one teeny-weeny little problem: he doesn't remember a single second of it. He's also leading a team of GL Corpsmen to rescue a lost member. Doesn't remember agreeing to that, either. Someone must've slipped him a mickey. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Dan Davis. **$1.99** (Dec. 1)

HITMAN #46

DC COMICS Don't ask us how we arrived at this point, but...Tommy is trying to shoot down some pterodactyls, while Scarback, King of the Dinosaurs, mounts an offense. From the warped mind of Garth Ennis, can you

expect anything else? This is a guy who would give any therapist a headache. By Ennis, John McCrea and Garry Leach. **$2.50** (Dec. 29)

IRON MAN #25

Marvel It's "Ultimate Danger," part three of three! This ish sees multimillionaire industrialist Tony Stark don his state-of-the-art mechanized Iron Man armor and stomp giant baddie Ultimo once and for all. Guest-starring Warbird, it'll probably blow as much as most recent issues of Shellhead's title have. But hey, watch for legendary *IM* artist Bob Layton's guest penciling stint. By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Sean Chen and Layton. **$2.99** (Dec. 8)

JLA #38

DC COMICS Have they got your slam-bang quota in this baby! Part three of the five-part "World War Three" storyline has Luthor's henchmen tearing down the JLA Watchtower. Not enough? Mageddon's back to wreak havoc. More? You want more, little man? What about Round Two of the Batman/Prometheus battle? Still more? Queen Bee transforms Metropolis into her own personal hive! See? Now we've over-stimulated you. Go and get some rest. By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.99** (Dec. 22)

JLA: EARTH 2

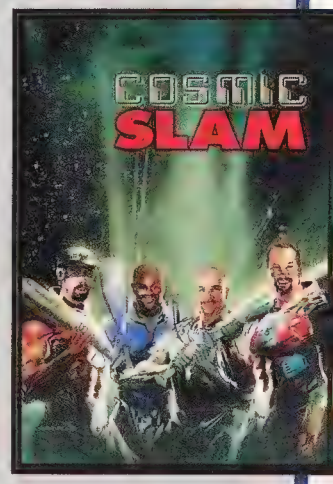
DC COMICS Now *this* looks cool. Feel the bang of a 96-page, hardcover graphic novel of the JLA facing their evil counterparts from a parallel universe. Sometimes counterparts are also known as "dopplegangers," or "Evil Fill-in-Name-Here." (Example: "It's Evil John Tesh!") In this book, it's Ultraman, Superwoman, Owlman and Power Ring who wanna stomp our heroes. Did we mention it's by Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely? **$24.95** (Dec. 8)

ontheedge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

COSMIC SLAM #1 (OF 2)

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMICS



Remember *SuperPro*? That Marvel series from awhile back that featured a crime-fightin' football star? Well, now we can all bask in the post-World Series afterglow with *Cosmic Slam* #1, wherein all-star hitters Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa, Dave Justice and Jeff Bagwell unite to save the planet. You see, there's an alien invasion goin' on, and it seems the only thing that'll stop the bug-eyed uglies is...a cosmic home run derby? Seeing as how related series *Fastball Express*, *Shortstop Squad* and *Super Sluggers* are comin' to stands near you right behind the greatness that is *Cosmic Slam*, we'd root for the aliens. **$3.95** (late Dec.)

NIGHTWING #40

DC COMICS Who says comic characters don't grow up? Check this: The original Robin, who's been around since 1940, now stars in one of DC's best comics! And he finally got outta those short pants. In this ish, the Tarantula (from the ancient All-Star Squadron) is being dogged by two criminals, and it's up to neighbor Nightwing to protect him. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.99** (Dec. 8)

RISING STARS #4

TOP COW/IMAGE What if you were born special? That's the question posed in this issue, with a young woman born with abilities beyond the reach of her family and friends. Problem is, they haven't manifested themselves yet. We're guessing those hormones just need to kick in. By J. Michael Straczynski and Christian Zanier. **$2.50** (Dec. 22)

ROBIN #73

DC COMICS Tim Drake on a milk carton? Yes, indeedy: Believing him lost in the cesspool that is No Man's Land, Robin's dad will do whatever it takes to get his pwecious wittle boy back. "His father pulls strings with the Senate," explains writer Chuck Dixon. "His father has no idea he's Robin—he thinks he went into Gotham on a dare. So the U.S. Marshals go in to rescue Tim. The politics of it are so silly: You have hundreds of thousands of people trapped in Gotham, and everybody's worried about this one kid." But Robin is alive and well, and probably wishing he had a rock to crawl under. The only one with a solution might be Batgirl. By Chuck Dixon, N. Steven Harris and Wayne Faucher. **$1.99** (Dec. 15)

SAVAGE DRAGON #70

IMAGE The Big Green Guy celebrates the holidays by

HUH!? WIZARD'S GROWN OVER THE YEARS, SUCCESSFULLY PUBLISHING *WIZARD*, *TOYFARE*, *INQUEST GAMER*, *TOY WISHES*, *INPOWER*, *TOONS*, ETC. OUR TWO FLOPS? *COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK* (ABOUT SPORTS COLLECTIBLES) AND *ER* (A COMIC INDUSTRY TRADE MAG).
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

fighting for his life and rescuing little kids from danger. "I wanted to do a real sort of Christmas-y, homey, warm, wonderful, type of story with Dragon and his daughter," explains writer/artist/nut Erik Larsen, who also promises a foul-mouthed Santa to appear. "But there'll still be fights galore." Hey, Dragon: can't you ever just curl up by the fire with some eggnog and a ski bunny? Stay inside! Ignore the cries for help! It's your holiday, too, man. By Larsen. **$2.50** (late Dec.)

SPAWN BOOKS

IMAGE Gooey, sticky, first-degree-burn-inducing fun! *Spawn* #93 has the ugly bastard chasing after a bunch of other ugly bastards who commit horrific crimes. All there any other kind? *Spawn Bible Volume II* combines art and text (duh) to detail character histories and storylines for new readers. And *Spawn: The Undead* #7 features the thrill-a-minute story of a woman deathly afraid of escalators. By a whole mess of Spawny creators who follow Todd and his balls around all day. **$1.95—*Spawn*; $4.95—*Bible*; $2.25—*Undead*** (late Dec.)

SPAWN #93

SPIDER-GIRL #17

MARVEL Wanna know how to make Peter Parker appear older? Give him a goatee, man. Very stylish and sophisticated. The ladies love it. Heck, some of the men might love it. But we won't go there. Peter is forced to don the Spider-threads again when daughter May finds herself in hot water with Kaine. Look out for Darkdevil and the Kingpin in this ish, too. By Tom DeFalco, Pat Olliffe and Al Williamson. **$2.99** (Dec. 8)

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

MARVEL Sexual tension galore! In *Amazing Spider-Man* #14 (Dec. 8), Spider-Woman has the hots for Peter. They'd make a cute couple, no doubt. But Mattie Franklin won't have time for lovin' when she realizes the original Spider-Woman is

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

BATMAN: HAUNTED GOTHAM #1 **(DC)** An Elseworlds tale of Bruce Wayne to against a gang of slobbering monsters. **$4.95** (Dec. 24)

BLAZE OF GLORY #1 **(Marvel)** This mini-series drags coughing, dusty Old West yahoos from decades ago back into the public eye. **$2.99** (Dec. 15)

FATHOM 2000 SWIMSUIT COMIC BOOK CALENDAR **(Top Cow/Image)** That's a mouthful. Michael Turner's hotties in a comic book-sized calendar. Seek help now. **$2.95** (Dec. 24)

FORTUNE AND GLORY #1 **(Oni Press)** Indie comics maven Brian Michael Bendis recounts his Hollywood experience in comic form. **$4.95** (late Dec.)

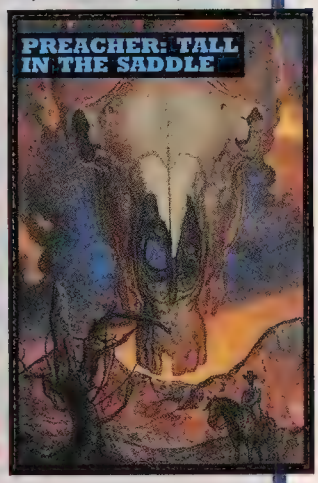
JLA SHOWCASE 80-PAGE GIANT #1 **(DC)** Chock full o' your favorite team members by various creative types. Just enough reading for a couple trips to the loo. **$4.95** (Dec. 15)

JSA: THE LIBERTY FILES #1 (OF 2) **DC** More Elseworlds fluff, with the Golden Age counterparts of Batman and Superman battling evil during World War II. **$6.95** (Dec. 8)

NEW ETERNALS: APOCALYPSE NOW **(Marvel)** The cosmic superpowers attempt to stop a war between humans and the sewer-dwelling Deviants. Bah. Who asked 'em? **$3.99** (Dec. 1)

PREACHER: TALL IN THE SADDLE **(Vertigo/DC)** Jesse and Tulip in the early days of their relationship. Crazy kids. $5.95 (Dec. 15)

PULP FANTASTIC #1 **(Vertigo/DC)** A dime-novel portrayal of earth after a religious cult stirs things up. **$2.50** (Dec. 29)


PREACHER: TALL IN THE SADDLE

SAM STORIES: LEGS **(Image)** Sam "Foot Fetish" Kieth's story about a boy and his alien pet. And he *will* be cleaning up after it. **$2.50** (late Dec.)

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION—PERCHANCE TO DREAM #1 **(WildStorm/DC)** Picard and company arrive on a newly sanctioned Federation planet and immediately find trouble. Ain't that always the way? **$2.50** (Dec. 8)

STAR WARS: EPISODE 1—THE PHANTOM MENACE MANGA #1 **(Dark Horse)** Same ol' stuff, bigger eyes. By Kia Asamiya! **$9.95** (Dec. 15)

SUPERMAN: END OF THE CENTURY **(DC)** A hardcover graphic novel with Supes and Lois battling the offspring of Ms. Lex Luthor. **$24.95** (Dec. 15)

SUPERMAN VS. TERMINATOR: DEATH TO THE FUTURE #1 **(Dark Horse/DC)** The kind of match-up usually only found in a fanboy's notebook doodlings. Maybe it should've stayed there. **$2.95** (Dec. 29)

SUPERMAN Y2K **(DC)** Metropolis gets a makeover for the new millennium by new Super-writer Joe Kelly. **$4.95** (Dec. 24)

TOTEMS **(Vertigo/DC)** A team-up of stock Vertigo performers: Animal Man! Swamp Thing! Robotman! **$5.95** (Dec. 29)

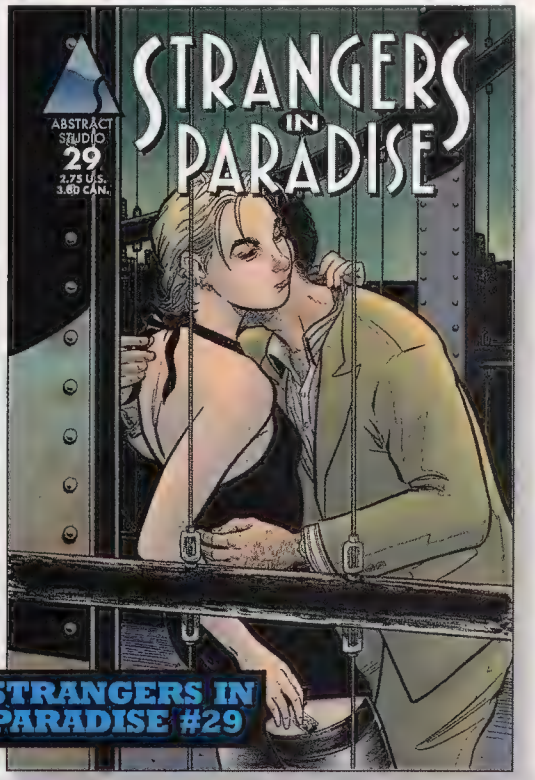
WILDCATS: MOSAIC **(WildStorm/DC)** Spartan and Lord Emp encounter life-altering situations in stories by Scott Lobdell. **$3.95** (Dec. 1)

WORLD BELOW II #1 **(Dark Horse)** A team of thrill-seeking agents attempt to locate magic technology. By Paul Chadwick. **$2.95** (Dec. 29)

after her. Probably for copyright infringement. By Howard Mackie, John Byrne and Dan Green. Over in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #14 (Dec. 15), Petey tries to release some stress by picking a fight with the Hulk. On the scale of bad ideas, that one's right up there with "Speed 2." By Mackie, John Romita Jr. and Scott Hanna. **$1.99 each**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #29

ABSTRACT STUDIOS Not reading this faboo independent book yet? Start here with the beginning of storyarc "Twilight's Child," wherein the book's trio of stars, Katchoo, Franchine and David, are forever affected by a plane crash. But was the tragedy an accident, or sabotage? Bonus: paper clothing for the paper dolls featured in last month's issue. By Terry Moore. **$2.75** (late Dec.)



STRANGERS IN PARADISE #29

SUPERMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Y'know what makes Superman more powerful than a locomotive? Jeph Loeb and Joe Kelly. Thanks to these writers, the Super-books are rockin'. In *Superman* #153 (Dec. 1), Supes sides with villain Mongul to combat the even more dangerous Imperiex. *Adventures of Superman* #575 (Dec. 8) has the Kents' evening at the opera interrupted by an assassination attempt on Lex Luthor. In *Superman: The Man of Steel* #97 (Dec. 15), Big Blue teams up with Steel to prevent Eradicator from destroying Stryker's Island prison. And *Action Comics* #762 (Dec. 22) does the holiday thing by having the Demon Etrigan pose as Santa Claus. By a bunch of guys running around in bath towel capes. **$1.99 each**

THOR #20

MARVEL Thor? Wake us when it's over. Zzzzz...No, Cindy, just a little bit to the left. Yeah, that's how daddy likes it. Mmm...Over yet? No? Damn. Thor has to deal with Loki in this issue. Big surprise. Enrakt's true identity might be revealed. What a tease. And some baddies in Asgard are plotting against Thor. Stop the presses. By Dan Jurgens and Michael Ryan. (Geez, it looks like even regular artist John Romita Jr. is jumping ship off this book.) **$1.99** (Dec. 1)

what I'm reading

PRO PICKS

ALEX ROSS

(plotter/cover artist of *Earth X*, plotter/artist of *Batman: War on Crime*)

"You know what I always drop everything to read? *Avengers Forever* and *Inhumans*. To me, those are two of the most solidly entertaining books. Knowing Kurt Busiek, and working with him, I don't think Kurt fully appreciates how good a series he's involved with. And I'm on the comp list now at my comic shop for *Solar Lord*, just because hey, it's actually a really good-looking book."

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

TOM STRONG #6

WILDSTORM/DC *Watchmen* fans alert: Legendary team Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons are back together again in a back-up story in this issue! As if this book didn't kick enough ass! In the main tale, Tommy Boy fights a foe that's risen from the grave. Icky, icky stuff. Why can't he fight a well-scrubbed evil dude, maybe one wearing a nice tuxedo? Don't folks dress up for evil anymore? By Moore, Chris Sprouse and Gibbons. **$2.95** (Dec. 29)

TOMB RAIDER #2

TOP COW/IMAGE Lara Croft is Indiana Jones, only a helluva lot better lookin'. In her second issue, the fearless forager finally finds the dreaded Medusa Mask in the remote mountains of Katmandu. That ain't all, though—Lara also finds an old acquaintance from her past back from the dead! Wow, what some guys will do for a date. By Dan Jurgens, Andy Park and Jon Sibal. **$2.50** (Dec. 15)

USAGI YOJIMBO #34

DARK HORSE "The Mystery of the Demon Mask" begins in this issue, where Usagi is hunted by a serial killer. That'll get your blood pumping. Usagi's a pretty tough character—some kind of samurai rabbit. Our advice? Don't pet him. Don't call him a "widdle bunny wabbit." Don't offer to spoon out his Cocoa Puffs. That is all. By Stan Sakai. **$2.95** (Dec. 15)

WOLVERINE #147

MARVEL Wolvie's after a brand-new enemy in this issue, as well as feeling the effects of "The Twelve" saga. There's sure to be some beer-drinking. Maybe Logan going off the deep end, getting a little upset, and aiming to carve someone up. He doesn't handle anger very well. Temperamental little guy. Maybe a nice bubble bath would help. By Fabian Nicieza, Leinil Francis Yu and Dexter Vines. **$1.99** (Dec. 29)

HUH!? VICTOR TAYBACK, SORRELL BOOKE AND CONRAD BAIN. THEY'VE WRITTEN TONS OF STUFF FOR *WIZARD*, BUT THEY DON'T EXIST—THEY'RE PSEUDONYMS FOR THE WIZARD STAFF. IN REALITY, THEY'RE ACTORS FROM "ALICE," "THE DUKES OF HAZARD" AND "DIFF'RENT STROKES."
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

X-MEN BOOKS

MARVEL "The Twelve" saga ends here! *Uncanny X-Men 1999* (Dec. 15) uncovers the fate of Genosha in the wake of the humongo Apocalypse battle. But who's siding with Magneto? *Uncanny X-Men* #377 (Dec. 1) finally brings together the Twelve as one cohesive whole in the blinding sands of Egypt. *Cable* #76 (Dec. 1) has Scott and Nathan Summers teaming up for what could be the last time against a common threat. And *X-Men* #97 (Dec. 1) wraps up the whole big flamin' mess, as the Twelve and Apocalypse duke it out. First time, last time, only time. By a bunch of talented folk. **$1.99 each; $3.50—*1999***

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

SUPERMAN

STRONG GUY Superman's so mighty he could lift the Taj Mahal. He's definitely strong enough to knock your average thug unconscious with just a flick of his middle finger. (*Who's Who* #22, *Batman and Superman: World's Finest* #1)

LADIES' MAN Superman's had a number of girlfriends over the years (Lana Lang, Lori Lemaris), but he finally made it legal with Lois Lane and walked her down the aisle. (*Superman: The Wedding Album* #1)

BABY BLUES Superman's "super vision" actually includes several sight-powers: the ability to see over vast distances, in microscopic detail, beyond the range of visible light, and through solid objects. (*Who's Who?* #22)

TEST-TUBE BABY Supes was nurtured in a Kryptonian Gestation Chamber, rather than his mother's womb. Kryptonians didn't believe in physical love or child-bearing. (*Man of Steel* #1)

BULLETPROOF Sure, bullets fly off his chest, but Superman isn't completely invulnerable–he's actually been beaten bloody on a few occasions. (*Superman* #75)

EXECUTIONER Superman once killed three renegade Kryptonians–General Zod, Quex-Ul and Zaora–by exposing them to Kryptonite. Even though he did it to save lives, the deed still haunts him. (*Superman* #22)

SEEING RED Microwave busted? No problem. Superman's solar-based "heat vision" allows him to generate heat in other objects; it manifests itself as a red glow in his eyes. (*Who's Who?* #22)

SAY WHAT? Superman's hearing is super-sensitive, allowing him to hear someone whispering from all the way up in the ionosphere or to hear when invisible opponents approach. (*JLA: Midsummer's Nightmare* #1; #3)

SOLAR BATTERY Superman gains his powers from our yellow sun; his body is one huge solar battery. But if the sun gets blocked out, his powers disappear! (*Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* #4)

ACHILLES' HEEL Superman's biggest weakness is Kryptonite, radioactive chunks of his home planet that reduce his powers and can even kill him. Its effects aren't cumulative, however–he'll regain full strength as soon as he gets away from it. (*Superman* #1)

ORIGIN

Just before the planet Krypton exploded, Jor-El and Lara sent their baby son, Kal-El, rocketing into space to spare his life. Landing on Earth, Kal-El was adopted by kindly farmers the Kents, who raised him as their own. As he approached maturity, Clark Kent discovered that Earth's yellow sun gave him powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Faster than a speeding bullet, able to bend steel in his bare hands, Clark opted to use his powers to aid humanity as Superman. Recent years have been huge in Supes' life: he's been killed by Doomsday, returned to life, married Lois Lane and assumed leadership of the mighty Justice League of America.

NOW APPEARING

In addition to *JLA*, Superman appears in *Action Comics, Superman, Adventures of Superman* and *Superman: Man of Steel*, all of which will feature minor cataclysms for Supes this December. It all ends in *Y2K*, December's 80-page giant written by Joe Kelly (*Action*). "Somebody's managed to play on all our Y2K paranoia," says Kelly. "It's all leading to this really insane adventure that literally recreates Metropolis as the City of Tomorrow." In January, a crossover in all four Superman titles deals with a major villain taking control of Metropolis, and Lois and Clark's marriage hits the rocks, as well. Says Kelly, "It's going to be a pretty nasty year for Superman; some pretty harsh stuff happens to him. And I, for one, can't wait to see it!"

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

XENA RALLIES FOR BATTLE

Warrior Princess rides on Dark Horse Comics

BOOKS IN THE TOP 25 Despite DC's varied comic lines, Marvel still hogs the sales charts, crowding out 18 slots of the top 25 this month to DC's 5 and Image's 2.

SOURCE: Diamond Comic Distribution; sales figures represent initial direct market orders.

And now, the Warrior Princess enters into battle on a Dark Horse.

As America continues to dig the TV stories of "Xena: Warrior Princess," the revival of the comics by Dark Horse has been little but positive. As opposed to former *Xena* publisher Topps—more of a sports card company in any event—fans expect the Dark Horse series to be better written and marketed, based on the Horse's success with licensed "Star Wars" and "Buffy" comics.

This in turn has sparked Xena fans to buy the Topps back issues, in particular the photo covers. We don't advocate buying comics to *not* read them, but some fans view the Xena comics only as glorified collectibles. Also, keep your eyes peeled for:

Strangers in Paradise #16—Gotta admit: This one caught us flat-footed. When Terry Moore did Xena parodies for *SiP* #16, Xena fanatics rushed in, buying the two covers—especially with enforcer Tambi as Xena—as high as $51 on the Internet (both covers guide at about $20).

Hercules: The Legendary Journeys #3 (photo cover)—Xena's first appearance—especially the photo cover—had been slipping, but is now fighting back at $15 a pop.

TV Guide (w/Xena comic insert)—This isn't your usual comic format, but the Aug. 9-15, 1997 issue of *TV Guide* had an exclusive Xena comic as part of a Topps promotion. Not a bad marketing scheme, and the issue now nets about $16.

Xena (Dark Horse) #1, #2—We're warning you now—issue #1 of the Dark Horse series was woefully underordered at 36,000 copies, and issue #2 was even more shameless with 28,000. If you see an upswing in orders with, let's say, #4 or #5, take it as a sign that retailers know they missed the boat and are upping orders.

UNIVERSAL GRADING SYSTEM GEARS UP

Finally, fanboy, you can *pay* to make the grade.

Face facts: Decades after comics were born, grading's still a very haphazard practice. No matter how religiously one tries to set guidelines, what's Very Fine to one person isn't Very Fine to another.

The sports card industry largely fixed this with the introduction of an independent grading service that would professionally grade cards, assign them a rating and seal them in a holder. Thus was born a universal system

HUH!? SPAWNY-GUY CREATOR TODD McFARLANE WAS RANKED #1 IN THE "TOP 10 ARTISTS" LIST OF "MARKET WATCH" A WHOPPING 54 TIMES SINCE *WIZARD* #1!

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

for all sports cards collectors to evaluate their wares.

We tell you this because Comics Guaranty Corporation (CGC), an independent grading service, now exists. And even if it takes years to gestate, it'll likely redefine the comic book market as we know it.

What CGC Does

The idea with CGC is that you'd submit your book through an authorized dealer and pay $12.50 to $85, depending on the value of your book or books, plus the speed you want them returned to you. The book would be rated on a scale of one to 10 and then "slabbed," that is to say, sealed in a tamper-proof, protective holder to preserve its condition. The higher up the scale you go, the harder the qualifications, meaning a perfect 10 would be extremely rare.

How This Affects Prices

Slabbing your books could be like winning the lottery.

It's nutty, but the value of high-rated books could increase in value *exponentially*. The sports card industry gives us some clues here. Let's say an unslabbed Mark McGwire card, which we'd all agree is in mint condition, will likely sell for $250. Not bad money—but a slabbed Mark McGwire card that's rated 9 could be worth four digits, and one with the *highest possible rating of 10* could sell for as much as $10,000. No dope. There aren't many 10s out there, though—the sports card graders publish the results of their gradings, and 10s are *rare*.

And How This Affects You

In the short term, very little.

The sports card grading system took *years* to become standard, meaning 2000 is unlikely to see crazed prices. However, it's possible that years from now—and we're not joking here—something like a *Spawn* #1 with a 10 could be worth $200 (Right now, a mint, "unslabbed" *Spawn* #1 guides at $15).

In the meantime, the grading system will likely favor collectors with Golden and Silver Age books, since blowing even $12.50 on modern-age, middle-grade books such as *Battle Chasers* #1 doesn't economically make any sense—you're unlikely to recoup the value. But watch out, because this system likely will almost

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, WAID, STRACZYNSKI, ROSS, TURNER, KUBERT, QUESADA, KUBERT, JR. BY PAUL SCHRADER; MOORE BY BOB MARTIN; ENNIS BY MAUREEN McTIGUE; BURGENS, CLAREMONT BY AL ORTEGA; ELLIS BY STEPHEN ELLISON; KRUEGER COURTESY KRUEGER; LOEB BY SCHIRALDI, PÉREZ BY BOB SMITH; CAMPBELL BY JOHN W. MCDONOUGH; YU COURTESY YU; LARROCA BY LARROCA; HA COURTESY HA

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Alan Moore
"America's Best Comics"

2. Kurt Busiek
Avengers, Astro City

3. Mark Waid
Flash, upcoming: *JLA*

4. Garth Ennis
Preacher, upcoming: *Punisher*

5. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Tomb Raider

6. Warren Ellis
Planetary, Transmetropolitan

7. Chris Claremont
Fantastic Four, upcoming: *X-Men*

8. Jeph Loeb
Superman, Batman: Dark Victory

9. J. Michael Straczynski
Rising Stars

10. Jim Krueger
Earth X

ARTISTS

1. Alex Ross
Earth X, Batman: War on Crime

2. Michael Turner
Fathom

3. George Pérez
Avengers

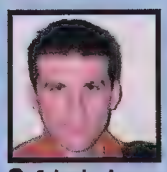
4. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

5. Adam Kubert
Uncanny X-Men

6. Joe Quesada
Daredevil

7. Leinil F. Yu
Wolverine

8. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P.P.: Spider-Man



9. Salvador Larroca
Fantastic Four

10. Gene Ha
Top Ten

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

FATALE #1

J.G. Jones has a talent for comic women, the sort that can *bite* us anytime. Fan response to Jones' *Black Widow* mini-series was astonishing, and he's slated for further greatness from the Marvel Knights team.

But almost no fans recall Jones' first work, *Fatale* #1, from the defunct Broadway Comics. For that matter, few fans recall Broadway, but they're likely to start as Jones' popularity grows.

You wouldn't buy *Fatale* #1 for the story–because frankly, it's rather shallow–but for some fans, Jones' art is enough of an excuse to buy it, and hey, we guarantee there's a host of quarter bins with this sucker in 'em waiting to be mined. Dive in, kids–she's waiting. ■ LP

undoubtedly change the comic market. It'll be interesting to see where we go from here.

GOLDDIGGER STRIKES IT RICH

We can't resist saying it: Another manga series has struck gold. Such is the case with *Golddigger*, a book about some rather feline-looking chicks who go on archaeology digs and inevitably find high adventure. It now has a ruthlessly loyal audience, and sells well enough to justify some color stories—a rarity for manga titles.

On the back market, *Golddigger* interest has added luster to several issues printed for spittle years ago. *Golddigger* (current series) #1, with its paltry 2,200 copies, now guides at $90. Even better, a meager 1,900 copies of *Golddigger* #2 now guide at a whopping $175 each. Basically, every issue of the original *Golddigger* mini-series, plus the first five issues of the current run, now trade for potent amounts. For a full listing, consult the price guide.

STEAMING HOT Anticipation rises for *Steampunk*.

STEAMPUNK STOKES THE FIRE

Feel *Steampunk*'s heat, fanboy.

Even as fans bemoan Cliffhanger's painful publishing schedule, allow us to forecast the success of *Steampunk* from creators Chris Bachalo and Joe Kelly. A key sign is the *Steampunk* preview, officially titled *Steampunk 1999* (even though it says "Steampunk Ashcan—Idiosincratica" on the cover) which is already a $10 hit with fans—and it's not even a full comic. Instead, it's a series of letters between the book's creators, with some drawings thrown in. And if that sort of preview garners $10 of attention, you can guess what the main series is going to do. At worst, it'll be a quick flash-in-the-pants, *or* if Bachalo and Kelly come out on time, it'll be a sales barnburner. Either way, don't let a copy pass you by.

Late at night, Wizard *Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson re-enacts Stallone's scenes from the movie "Cliffhanger" in his Green Lantern Underoos.*

RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

RELIABLE SOURCES

Bruno Andreacchi
B.A.'s Comics & Nostalgia
121 Oxford St. East London
Ontario, Canada NGA 1T4
(519) 439-9636

Chris Barchuk
Wizard World
Rockland Center
51 E. Rt. 59
Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

Dave Braunstein
Eldorado Comics
2110 E. Rt. 70
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

Rich Conley
Heroes & Fantasies
914 Pat Brooker Road
Universal City, TX 78148
(210) 945-9884

D. Roberts & J. Walker
Legends Comics
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd.
Paducah, KY 42001
(612) 822-2806

Dash Hobbeheydar &
Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
P.O. Box 11041
Scottsdale, AZ 85271
(602) 990-9224

Steve Huber
Galaxy Comics
10 North 36th Street
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 962-8239

Brian Kozicki & John Cathell
Buried Under Comics
188 West Middle Turnpike
Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 643-7295

Ivan Matos
Comic Connection
2128-C Fort Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

Ron McClure
American Comics and Cards
6787 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 490-0501

Avrom Oliver
Adventures in Comics & Games
6026 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 973-9064

Jerry Ringi
Amazing Fantasy
4300 Portsmouth Blvd.
Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
(757) 465-8390

Tom Shea
TJ Collectibles
160 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5874

Steve Snyder
Central City Comics
1460 Bethel Rd.
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 459-5045

Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
3149 1/2 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

Doug Miers
Comics Conspiracy
115 A. East Fremont Ave.
Sunnyville, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
1344 E. Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
5615 Balboa Ave.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
New Dimension Comics
Units 20-21
20550 Rte. 19
Cranberry Township, PA
16066-7520
(412) 776-0433

Phil Davis
B & D Comic Shop
802 Elm St. South West
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

Damon McCulloch
Comics & Comix
6135 Sunrise Blvd.
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 969-0717

Robert Letscher II
Key Comics
PO Box 3855
Scottsdale, AZ 85271-3855
(602) 949-8499

John Chruscinski &
Bruce Ellsworth
Tropic Comics
313 S. State Rd. #7
Plantation, FL 33317

James Elkins
Comic Connection
21280 Ft. Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

David Beauchamp
Penguin Comics
3315 S. Welwood
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 551-2051

John Graziano
Comics Plus
1383 Highway 35
Middletown, NJ 07748
(908) 706-0102

Mark Thompson
Cold Cuts
5704 Calmor Ave. #1
San Jose, CA 95123
(408) 229-0930

Jamie Graham
5 East Chicago Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540
(630) 778-0700

Mike Johnson
Golden Apple
7711 Melrose Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Brian Johnson
All About Books & Comics
517 E. Camelback
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 277-9757

RETAILER NETWORK A-1 Book Exchange in St. Louis, Mo.; Back to the Past in Livonia, Mi.; Bali Book Store in Alphambra, Calif.; Beyond Comics in Medford, Ore.; Bob's Cards and Comics in Buzzard's Bay, Mass.; Book Barn inJoplin, Mo.; Book Trader in Minot, N.D.; Bookman's Used Books in Flagstaff, Ariz.; C & C Cards & Comics in St. Albans, W. Va.; California Card Company in Elk Grove, Calif.; Cards Coins & Comics in Davenport, Iowa; Clark's Comics in Hong Kong; Classic Comics in Philadelphia, Pa.; Classic Comics #2 in Philadelphia, Pa.; Collection Connection in Greensboro, N.C., Collector's World in Anderson, In; Comic Archives in Apple Valley, Minn.; Comic Case in Trenton, N.J.; Comic Collector in Riverside, Ill.; Comic Den in Kew Gardens; N.Y.; Comic Encounters in Terrance, British Columbia, Canada; Comic World in Lincoln, Nev.; Comics, Cards and Stuff in Ft. Myers, Fla.; Comics & Cards Trading Post in Montgomery, Ala.; Comics Direct in Niceville, Fla.; Comics Galaxy in Singapore; Comics Plus in Los Banos, Calif.; Comics Plus in Middletown, N.J.; Comics Plus in Ocean, N.J.; Comics Plus in Wanamassa, N.J.; Comics Unlimited in North Bend, Ore.; Comix & More in Chino, Calif.; Dizzy's Dugout in Collinsville, Ill.; Duncanville Bookstore in Duncanville, Texas; E + C Books in Alliance, Ohio; Emerald City Comics and Collectibles in Seminole, Fla.; Excalibur C's., CD's. & G's. in Texarkana, Texas; Fandom's Comic World of Reno in Reno, Nev.; Fun House Toys & Comics in Orleans, Mass.; Golden Empire Bookstore in Bakersfield, Ohio; Golden Unicorn Comics in Hazleton, Pa.; Gypsy Witch Comics in Staunton, Va.; Heroes and Dragons in Columbia, S.C.; Heroes & Fantasies in San Antonio, Texas; Hot Comics East in St. Paul, Minn.; Hudmar Ltd. in Marlboro, Mass.; Independent Comics in Gainesville, Fla.; J & E Cards & Comics Ltd. in Baltimore, Md.; Key Comics in Scottsdale, Ariz.; Kim's Collectible Comics in Seabrook, Md.; Lionheart in Ranchos Palos Verdes, Calif.; Locker Room in East Liverpool, Ohio; Mac's Cards in Vernon, Conn.; Marie's Books & Things in Fredericksburg, Va.; Mr. Green's Comics in Dublin, Calif.; New Age Comics in Chico, Calif.; New Time Machine in Bradentown, Fla.; Night Flight in Salt Lake City, Utah; Nostalgia Zone in Minneapolis, Minn.; 1,000,000 Comix of Idaho in Boise, Idaho; Plus Comics in Roanoke, Va.; Rangeline Comics in Indianapolis, Ind.; Rhino Supreme Comics & Cards in Ridgefield Park, N.J.; Rockabilly Comics in Beverly Hills, Calif.; Rockbottom Comics in Columbia, Mo.; Seventh Star Comics & Gifts in Florence, S.C.; Showcase Collectibles in Alpharetta, Ga.; Showcase Comics & Cards in Selden, N.Y.; Southwest Comics in Del Rio, Texas; TJ Collectibles in Milford, Mass.; Taurus Comics in Port Huron, Mich.; The Card Connection in Columbus, Ohio; The Clubhouse in Encinitas, Calif.; The Comic Shop in Oswego, N.Y.; The Drawing Board in North Plainfield, N.J.; The Gamer's Den in Washington, Mo.; The Main Event in Casa Grande, Ariz.; TNT's Comic Market in Lawrence, Kan.; Twin Book Stores in Morehead City, N.C.; Warren's Bookstore in Lecanto, Fla.; Wilson's Comics & Cards in San Antonio, Texas; Wonder CD's + C's in Montpelier, Vt.; Wonder Years in Alpharetta, Ga.; Woodland Comics & Cards in Woodland, Calif.

HUH!? BATMAN, *DAREDEVIL* AND *SIN CITY* SCRIBE FRANK MILLER CLOCKED IN AS THE WINNER OF THE "TOP 10 WRITERS" LIST OF "MARKET WATCH," BEATING EVERYONE ELSE OUT WITH 16 FIRST-PLACE FINISHES.

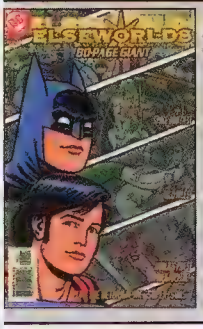
TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

HOTTEST BACK ISSUES

TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 ELSEWORLDS 80-PAGE GIANT #1



WRITERS: Lotsa guys
ARTISTS: Lotsa other guys

So you've got Superbaby suckin' udder, and whammo! Your book gets banned. But the 2,000 or so lucky Brits (who are big fans of drinking straight from the cow) who managed to get their hands on a copy get to see all the udder-suckin' they want. And that don't sit well with comic fandom at large, because they wanna see some udder-suckin', too. So the price just keeps going up and up and up! Jeez, udders haven't been this controversial since Britney Spears. **LAST MONTH: 2**

2 RISING STARS #1

WRITER: J. Michael Straczynski
ARTISTS: Keu Cha and Jason Gorder

Straczynski, Cha and Gorder are meeting such great success with *Rising Stars* that they're thinking of merging into one all-powerful being and taking over the entire comics industry. The all-powerful being would be known as J. Gordercha, and he would eat live sheep by the dozen and drink from your swimming pool in order to satiate his incredible hunger and quench his unquenchable thirst. He'd also write comics. Who can stop J. Gordercha? Who? Who??? Earth's last hope is... **LAST MONTH: 1**

3 AUTHORITY #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTIST: Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary

...Ellis Hitchneary, the 18-foot golem with fists like baby grand pianos! Yep, *Authority* #1 keeps gaining steam, thanks to the ever-burgeoning popularity of insane monster Warren Ellis. "Insane monster" sounds like kind of an insult, but not to Ellis. In fact, next time you see him, call him a horrible freak. He'll shake your hand and give you a dollar. **LAST MONTH: 6**

4 TOM STRONG #1

WRITERS: Alan Moore
ARTISTS: Chris Sprouse and Al Gordon

Speaking of horrible, insane freak monsters, Alan Moore is beginning to scare us all. How can he write so many super-popular comics each month after all these years. We think the key is his enormous beard. We think maybe it's a magic beard, from which he can pull scripts. Or ham sandwiches, if the need arises. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

5 TOP 10 #1

WRITER: Alan Moore
ARTISTS: Gene Ha and Zander Cannon

Calling this book *Top Ten* was pretty damn presumptuous of Alan Moore. Of course, his work is slowly eating up our monthly list here. Soon all that will remain here are Alan Moore back issues, including that rare issue of *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew* he scripted where Pig Iron was turned into raw light and met God. **LAST MONTH: 3**

6 STRANGERS IN PARADISE #16 ("XENA" COVER)

WRITER/ARTIST: Terry Moore

The once-hot *Xena* comic series plummeted into the depths of back-issue hell many months ago, but for some reason this Xena-spoofing issue of *SiP* is burning up the charts all of a sudden. Could this be the event that pushes Terry Moore into full speculator mode? Could chromium *SiP* covers be far behind? Say it ain't so, Terry! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

7 KABUKI: FEAR THE REAPER #1

WRITER: David Mack
ARTIST: David Mack

Kabuki's fan base is rock solid. So what happens when a whole new audience gets exposed to David Mack thanks to his work on *Daredevil*? Suddenly there's less Kabuki to go around. And the last thing this world needs, with a crisis in Pakistan and the rapid failure of the nuclear test ban treaty, is not enough Kabuki to go around. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

8 X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM #1

WRITER: Joe Casey
ARTISTS: Steve Rude and Andrew Pepoy

With the X-Universe so hit-or-miss when it comes to quality, the fans tend to really latch on when they find something they like. This funky retro X-Men tale with funky retro X-Men art has tickled everyone's fancy, and fans are clutching it tight. Hmm. If you read it with the right meter, the first two sentences of this paragraph make for one awful poem. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

9 SUPERMAN #151

WRITER: Jeph Loeb
ARTISTS: Mike McKone and Marlo Alquiza

It's the dawn of a new era in Supes Land, thanks to the shakeup of the creative teams, and what happens? Retailers slightly underordered this ish, and fans slightly overbought it, and...well, you can connect the dots from there. But more importantly...could Kone Marloeb take down J. Gordercha and Ellis Hitchneary in a battle royale? **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

10 ASTONISHING X-MEN #1

WRITER: Howard Mackie
ARTISTS: Brandon Peterson and Tim Townsend

Whoops! What looked like another friggin' X-book actually turned out to contain some big-time X-events, and readers and retailers alike were caught with their pants down. Say, maybe one day Howard Mackie and David Mack will team up on a book, and they'll form a giant beast called...nah, forget it. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **OCTOBER**

TOP 100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff using data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

The dead Wolverine was exposed as a Skrull imposter in *Uncanny X-Men* #375.

1. Uncanny X-Men #375 (Marvel)

2. X-Men #95 (Marvel)
3. Danger Girl #6 (WildStorm/DC)
4. Wolverine #145 (foil cover) (Marvel)
5. JLA #36 (DC)
6. Spawn #91 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
7. Avengers #23 (Marvel)
8. Daredevil #10 (Marvel)
9. Earth X #9 (Marvel)
10. X-Men: The Hidden Years #1 (Marvel)
11. Amazing Spider-Man #12 (Marvel)
12. Fantastic Four #24 (Marvel)
13. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #12 (Marvel)
14. Thor #18 (Marvel)
15. X-Men: Children of the Atom #2 (Marvel)
16. Avengers Forever #12 (Marvel)
17. Batman: Dark Victory #1 (DC)
18. Captain America #24 (Marvel)
19. Iron Man #23 (Marvel)
20. Wolverine 1999 (Marvel)
21. Mutant X #15 (Marvel)
22. X-Men Unlimited #25 (Marvel)
23. Batman #572 (DC)
24. Detective Comics #739 (DC)
25. Witchblade #36 (Top Cow/Image)
26. JSA #5 (DC)
27. X-Men: Phoenix #1 (Marvel)
28. Witchblade/Darkness Special (Top Cow/Image)
29. Batman: No Man's Land #0 (DC)
30. Avengers Domination Factor #2.4 (Marvel)
31. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #92 (DC)
32. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #124 (DC)
33. Nightwing #38 (DC)
34. Crimson #13 (WildStorm/DC)
35. Generation X #58 (Marvel)
36. Spawn: The Undead #5 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
37. Fantastic Four: Domination Factor #2.3 (Marvel)
38. X-Force #97 (Marvel)
39. Inhumans #12 (Marvel)
40. Hulk #9 (Marvel)
41. Green Lantern #119 (DC)
42. Gambit #11 (Marvel)
43. Cable #74 (Marvel)
44. Spawn: The Dark Ages #8 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
45. Thunderbolts #33 (Marvel)
46. Flash #155 (DC)
47. Superman #151 (DC)
48. Sin City: Hell and Back #3 (Dark Horse)
49. Preacher #56 (Vertigo/DC)
50. Bishop: The Last X-Man #3 (Marvel)
51. Flash & Green Lantern: The Brave and the Bold #3 (DC)
52. Action Comics #760 (DC)
53. Adventures of Superman #573 (DC)
54. Superman: The Man of Steel #95 (DC)
55. Spider-Girl #15 (Marvel)
56. X-Man #58 (Marvel)
57. Titans #10 (DC)
58. Tom Strong #6 (WildStorm/DC)
59. Stone Cold Steve Austin #1 (Chaos!)
60. Tellos #4 (Image)
61. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #9 (DC)
62. Top Ten #4 (WildStorm/DC)
63. Robin #71 (DC)
64. Batman: No Man's Land Secret Files #1 (DC)
65. Spider-Woman #6 (Marvel)
66. Blade: Vampire Hunter #1 (Marvel)
67. Warlands #3 (Image)
68. Promethea #5 (WildStorm/DC)
69. JLA: Primeval (DC)
70. Galactus: The Devourer #4 (Marvel)
71. Generation X 1999 (Marvel)
72. Catwoman #75 (DC)
73. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #14 (Dark Horse)
74. Young Justice #15 (DC)
75. Planetary #7 (WildStorm/DC)
76. Fantastic Five #3 (Marvel)
77. Pokémon Part 3: Electric Pikachu Boogaloo #4 (Viz)
78. Wild Thing #3 (Marvel)
79. Tomorrow Stories #3 (WildStorm/DC)
80. Star Wars #11 (Dark Horse)
81. Deadpool #35 (Marvel)
82. Authority #8 (WildStorm/DC)
83. Black Panther #13 (Marvel)
84. Sam and Twitch #3 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
85. Batman/Tarzan: Claws of Catwoman #2 (Dark Horse)
86. New Warriors #3 (Marvel)
87. Gen^{13} #46 (WildStorm/DC)
88. Spawn: Blood & Salvation (Todd McFarlane/Image)
89. Flashpoint #1 (DC)
90. Star Wars: Bounty Hunters—Kenix Kil (Dark Horse)
91. Azrael: Agent of the Bat #59 (DC)
92. Xena: Warrior Princess #2 (Dark Horse)
93. Supergirl #39 (DC)
94. Avengers: United They Stand #2 (Marvel)
95. Tenth: Evil's Child #2 (Image)
96. X-51 #5 (Marvel)
97. Starman #60 (DC)
98. Ascension #20 (Top Cow/Image)
99. Deathlok #5 (Marvel)
100. Warlock #4 (Marvel)

HUH!?

WIZARD'S VARIANT COVERS ARE A FAIRLY COMMON THING THESE DAYS, BUT IT HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY. OUR FIRST VARIANT COVER TOOK PLACE BACK IN ISSUE #6, WITH SAM KIETH'S GREEN HULK AND GREY HULK.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

SHE'S STILL A DANGEROUS GIRL

Danger Girl #6 (No. 3)
It's late as hell. Readers are pissed. And yet, *and yet*, when *Danger Girl* creator J. Scott Campbell builds it, the fans come. This is actually a resolicit of *Danger Girl* #6, but despite the delay, this book ran roughshod over everything–except Marvel's core X-titles and...

Wolverine #145 (Nos. 4, 107)
The foil-cover version of this comic (which features the return of Wolvie's adamantium to celebrate the character's 25th anniversary) ranked No. 4. But the newsstand version of this comic–a $3 version with a non-foil cover–hit No. 107 on the charts, meaning it sold roughly 25,000 copies. If you add this to the foil version's tally, *Wolverine* #145 pounds all other comics into submission and becomes the No. 1 book for the month.

Batman: Dark Victory #1 (No. 17)
Not only did this sequel to *The Long Halloween* trump the core *Batman* book by six slots, the $5 *Dark Victory* #1 was easily DC's top money maker for the month, beaten only by the higher-than-normally priced *Uncanny X-Men* #375 and *Wolverine* #145. "No Man's Land" may have boosted Bat-sales this year, but fans are *really* looking forward to another murder mystery à la writer Jeph Loeb and artist Tim Sale.

Superman titles (Nos. 47, 52-54)
As part of a creator rotation that includes such talent as Jeph Loeb and Joe Kelly signing onboard to the core *Superman* books, most of Supes' titles showed a six-to-seven-percent gain. But given that fans have hungered for this creative shift for months–and that DC woefully undermarketed this new era–there's no way you can't convince us these books aren't under-ordered and ripe for price increases.

Stone Cold Steve Austin #1 (No. 59)
Wrestling! Wrestling! Wrestling! Hate to pat ourselves on the back, but we predicted that *Undertaker* #1 was a sleeper–and it was. This time, retailers did bump up orders on wrestling comic *Stone Cold Steve Austin* #1–but we're still betting it's too little, too late. With wrestling sure to be strong for some months yet, watch this sucker closely.

Tellos #4 (No. 60)
Ah, *Tellos*. Some retailers report it's selling well, and #4 issues often show a bump as retailers finally catch on that a book is popular and boost orders. But more importantly, this issue's four-cover split featuring the art of Jae Lee, Art Adams, Randy Green and *Tellos* co-creator Mike Wieringo sealed the deal and shot *Tellos* up 38 percent in sales and 35 places on the charts.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

'V' FOR VICTORY Guess earthquakes aren't so fun after all. Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's *Batman: Dark Victory* leads the Bat-pack.

TOP 10 BATMAN FAMILY BOOKS

1. Batman: Dark Victory #1 (No. 17)
2. Batman #572 (No. 23)
3. Detective Comics #739 (No. 24)
4. Batman: No Man's Land #0 (No. 29)
5. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #92 (No. 31)
6. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #124 (No. 32)
7. Nightwing #38 (No. 33)
8. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #9 (No. 61)
9. Robin #71 (No. 63)
10. Batman: No Man's Land Secret Files #1 (No. 64)

TOP 10 BOOKS OVER ISSUE 100

1. Uncanny X-Men #375 (No. 1)
2. Wolverine #145 (foil cover) (No. 4)
3. Batman #572 (No. 23)
4. Detective Comics #739 (No. 24)
5. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #124 (No. 32)
6. Green Lantern #119 (No. 41)
7. Flash #155 (No. 46)
8. Superman #151 (No. 47)
9. Action Comics #760 (No. 52)
10. Adventures of Superman #573 (No. 53)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. X-Men Alpha #1 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #41 (deluxe edition) (Marvel)
3. Uncanny X-Men #321 (deluxe edition) (Marvel)
4. Spawn #27 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
5. Angela #1 (Image)
6. Generation X #4 (deluxe edition) (Marvel)
7. Wolverine #90 (deluxe edition) (Marvel)
8. Azrael #1 (DC)
9. Rogue #2 (Marvel)
10. Batman #515 (collectors' edition) (DC)

ALPHA BETS You can bet this story was a hit with X-fans.

As one of the more notable X-events of the 1990s, Marvel offed Professor X in the past in *X-Men* #41, creating an alternate timeline ("The Age of Apocalypse") that debuted in *X-Men Alpha* #1. "AOA" won critical acclaim and had a strong marketing push, but increased orders meant that most of the issues involved–and eventually, the timeline itself–were consigned to quarter-bin hell. So it remains a good and cheap read.

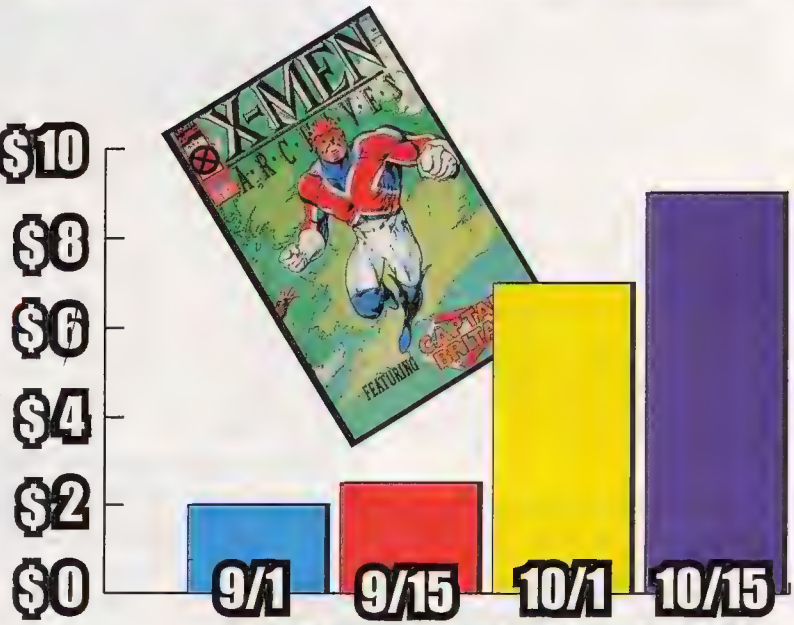
INTERNET REPORT FOR COMPUTER GEEKS EVERYWHERE! by Lars Pearson

'NET GAINS

MOORE MANIA

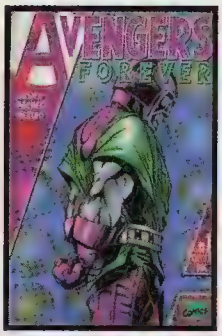
Fans want Moore with Captain Britain

More Moore! If you're wondering when the Alan Moore fan-wagon will end, it ain't gonna happen soon. Consider the case of the seven-issue *X-Men Archives Featuring Captain Britain* (not to be confused with Marvel's *Captain Britain* trade paperback). This reprint series was mostly used for toilet paper, but is now climbing into double digits. And who's the writer? What a surprise—the good Mr. Moore. Jump on board, kids.



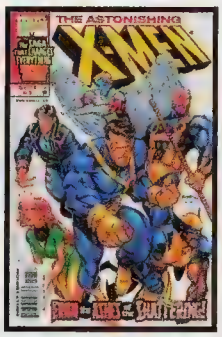
X-MEN ARCHIVES FEATURING CAPTAIN BRITAIN Source: eBay.com

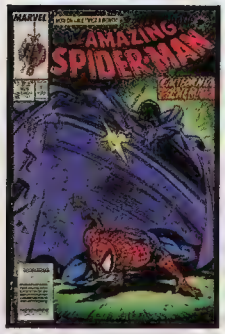
ups & downs



GOING UP

Riding a wave of popularity for *Avengers Forever*, a Westfield's Comics *AF* #1 variant cover rings in at $30, even $40. Also, support for the recent *Astonishing X-Men* series has carried over to the Dynamic Forces Authentix version–a sweet $15.





GOING DOWN

Fan criticism over new issues of the Spider-Man line continue to impale Spidey, with even some famed Todd McFarlane *Amazing* issues (#301-#305) going for a lowly $4 each. Meanwhile, atrocious shipping has hamstrung *Battle Chasers* #1 to a sullen $3 or $5 online.

ASSORTED CRAP REPORT

MERCH MADNESS

STATUES

Interest in Marvel's mini-busts appears to be stabilizing, although the original Iron Man mini-bust is still a hit at $55 to $65 on the Internet. Also, the Thor statue made by Randy Bowen appears to be taking an early beating at around $130, but Bowen-made statues have a tendency to rebound over time.

RINGS

Don't even think of giving these to your girlfriend (presuming you have one), but superhero replica rings are lighting the night on the Internet. A 10-karat X-Men ring has mutant (and sales) power, raking in $150. Legion of Super-Heroes flight rings have flown to $80 or more. A Green Lantern Sterling Silver ring debuted at $80 and has largely

HUH!? *EARTH X* CAME ABOUT BECAUSE WE ASKED ALEX ROSS TO DO A "KINGDOM COME" FOR MARVEL'S CHARACTERS IN A FANTASY FEATURE FOR US.

TRIVIAL TIDBITS FROM WIZARD THROUGH THE YEARS...

MERCHcont.

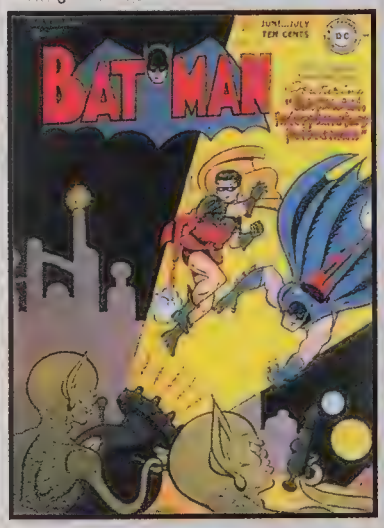
powered its way to $100. (And–not that we're encouraging knock-offs–a sterling silver knock-off crafted by a fan-based sculptor got $120.) Slightly behind the pack is the recently released Flash ring, floundering at $50 or a bit more, but wait until supplies dry up and Flashie gains ground.

ORIGINAL ART

Pardon us for stating the blatantly obvious, but if there's a current series you're utterly in love with, strike now to get the original art. Artists have bills to pay, so they're quite likely to try to make a fast buck on their art. Internet sales of recent art included artist Alex Maleev's *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #83 (the first appearance of the "new" Batgirl), with pages 13 and 15 sold as a set for $237.50. Even more recent, Gene Ha's stunning art from *Top 10* #1, page 21, hit $112.50.

GOLDEN AGE

It's almost as if the Golden Age's guiding principle is "the sillier, the better." Take *Batman* #41, which features "Batman, Interplanetary Policeman!", showing Bats and Robin on rocket packs attacking green-scaled aliens with tentacles. You'll rarely see anything more campy, but a copy in at least VF+ condition sold for $865. Also, a rather beat-up VG+ copy of *All-Star Comics* #50, showing the Golden Age Green Lantern and others confronting a giant finger (no kidding) proclaiming "The Prophecy of Peril!", fetched $227.50. Only a bit less ludicrous is a $328 VF copy of *Batman* #12, with Batman and Robin waving and hawking war bonds. Given today's drugs and violence, kids, we almost wanna go back to the 1940s.



MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

HOW TO USE THE PRICE GUIDE

The **WIZARD** guide contains the most accurate and up-to-the-minute comic book prices possible. Keep in mind that the Price Guide is only a guide; prices may vary depending on the local availability and popularity of a title.

IT'S EASY... The price guide is arranged alphabetically by title. Listings for trade paperbacks, annuals, one-shots and graphic novels are found after the regular listing for a title, and are likewise listed alphabetically. When a title has been used several times for different series, like *Legion of Super-Heroes* or even *Fantastic Four*, we list all series under that title chronologically.

You'll notice some book listings have color bars. Red means it's risen in value; blue, fallen in value; green, new issues and/or title listings; and yellow indicates heavy market trading activity, yet no change in value since last issue.

ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

After skipping articles "A," "An," and "The" at the beginning of a title, alphabetization is word by word, not letter by letter. Ex: "The Amazing Spider-Man" is listed under "Amazing," but "Batman: Sword of Azrael" comes before "Batman: The Animated Movie" because we include the article "The" when it's an interior part of the title. All titles starting with the word "Star," including "Star Wars," come before titles such as "Stardust" and "Starman." Abbreviations such as "Dr." are listed before titles like "Dragon" but after titles starting with "Doctor." Numeric titles such as "2099 A.D." will be mixed in alphabetically as if the numeral were spelled out as "Two thousand ninety-nine."

REFERENCES

SECRET DECODER RING

❶	First Appearance of
anniv	Anniversary issue
A	Appearance
B	Begin stories with
C	Cameo that pre-dates ❶
cvr	Cover
D	Death/Destruction of
GN	Graphic Novel
HC	Hardcover
IR	Identity revealed
J	Joins
L	Last story with
M	Married
O	Origin
p	part #
PF	Prestige Format
Q	Quits
R	Return of
SC	Softcover
sz	Size
TPB	Trade Paperback
w/	With
w/o	Without

MAKING THE GRADE

All prices listed in this guide are for Near Mint (NM) condition. When your comic isn't Near Mint, you can compute the price based on the percentages shown below. Keep in mind that everyone grades condition differently and many things factor into grading a comic: age, supply and demand for the various grades, retailer location, local availability, current popularity, and its specific condition. It might help if you grade comics on a 10-point scale, with 10 being perfect and 1 being crappy.

MINT (M): An almost perfect 9.8 to 10 on a 10-point scale! To be Mint, a comic must appear like the day it was printed–no nicks, dings or creases. No tears or shreds on corners, colors are crystal clear, cover gloss is still there and the staples are perfect. Many new comics fall short of Mint standards. Mint comics fetch 125-150% of price listed. Comics after 1970 in Mint should be priced at the Near Mint price, since Mint copies are not unusual for comics after 1970.

NEAR MINT (NM): A 9 on a 10-point scale. The book might appear to be Mint, but upon inspection, tiny flaws are seen. The gloss and color are outstanding. **ALL PRICES IN THIS GUIDE ARE FOR NM COPIES, WHICH ARE 100 PERCENT OF GUIDE LISTINGS.**

VERY FINE (VF): A 7 on a scale of 10. At first glance may appear Near Mint, but at closer range, you'll notice minor signs of use. VF comics are 70 percent of guide listings (75-80% for pre-1970 books).

FINE-VERY FINE (FVF): A 6 outta 10. Pages may be slightly yellow, but not brown or brittle in FVF books. Expect several tiny stress lines along the spine or covers and several tiny color flakes are permitted. The spine may have creases and corners may be slightly rounded, but great cover gloss remains. FVF books go for 50 percent of price guide listings.

FINE (FN): A 5 out of 10. Slightly better than average with obvious signs of wear, but still clean and bright without major creasing. Fine books go for 40 percent of price guide listings.

VERY GOOD (VG): A 3 out of 10. Average, at best. VG comics appear used, but not abused. They have creases and minor tears. Very Good books go for 15-25 percent of guide listings.

GOOD (G), FAIR (FR) and POOR (P): All are 1 or less out of 10. These books...suck. Heavily worn, these are the comics that have been re-read a lot. Good books go for 10 percent of price guide listings. Fair books can have loose pages or pieces missing from the cover and sell for 3 percent of listings. Poor books can have missing covers, pages, etc. These books go for 1 percent of listings.

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CONTACT:

Karen Evora
Advertising Projects Manager
Wizard Entertainment Advertising
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920
tel: (914) 268-3907 x144
fax: (914) 268-5386
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YEAR 2000 COMICS PREVIEW

WIZARD

THE COMICS [illegible]E #101

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COVER BY

ANDY PARK

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

With global Armageddon just a few short weeks away, what better time to reflect upon the deeds of the past then an all-"Highlights of '99" C.B.I.Q.? This month we'll be grading your knowledge of comic trivia against the lesser-known Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The higher your score, the lesser known the Horsemen.

SCORE	RANK
0	*Incontinence: Do NOT poke this guy's saddlebags.*
1-5	*Tourette's: Entertaining as hell, especially on line at McDonald's.*
6-11	*Impotence: Hey...it's NOT funny!*
12	*Fat Chick in Chainmail: Pity the horse (and wash the saddle).*

1 What was the year's most-threatening menace for the world's most formidable superteam, the Justice League of America?
A) Ra's Al Ghul almost moved the earth a fraction off its axis, which would have killed millions.
B) Lex Luthor claimed the real estate on the moon the JLA base is built on as Lexcorp property and seized control of the Watchtower.
C) Darkseid redirected an asteroid sixty miles wide and made of Kryptonite into the Earth's path.
D) A militant faction of Gorilla City (that's not a typo) set off a gene-bomb, transforming the team into monkeys.

2 Why technology is the Devil's work! What country did Ultron kill every man, woman, child–heck, EVERY living creature in?
A) Atlan
B) Slorenia
C) Slobeia
D) Canada. No...that'd be too extreme. But honestly, if we turned Canada into just a big parking lot for Americans, would anybody really notice?

3 That no-good Bullseye...! How did the master assassin screw with Daredevil this year?
A) He made a list of all the innocents Matt Murdock had defended in court and killed 'em.
B) He found the only eyewitness to a crime that would have cleared Matt Murdock's client of murder and offed him.
C) He went and killed DD's no-good, ex-junkie sweetie Karen Page.
D) Peed in the shower

4 Aunt May: What the hell did she do this year?
A) Came back from the dead
B) Remarried
C) Hit Venom in the head with her purse
D) Got a new haircut

5 What legendary superteam reformed and has a member that periodically turns into a pile of sand?
A) Justice Society of America
B) The Titans
C) Supermen of America
D) The League of What the Hell is DC Thinking Sometimes?

6 Anybody remember H.E.A.T.? Anyway, now that Hal Jordan went nuts, died, came back from the past before he died but after he went nuts, what is his new status quo?
A) He's the new Guardian of the Universe, complete with li'l red robe and big blue head.
B) He's the new Black Racer, complete with safety helmet and shiny red skis.
C) He's the new Spectre, complete with tighty-whiteys and green Zorro mask.
D) Drunk and pantsless

7 In yet another horrible storyarc, Wally West seemingly died and a mysterious new Flash took his place. Who is he?
A) A pre-"I just died" Wally West
B) A future-version Wally West
C) An alternate-reality Wally West
D) Maybe "A," maybe "B"...it doesn't matter. Does anybody really care at this point?

8 To "control" the power-hungry, would-be world-conqueror Magneto and head of the "Brotherhood of Evil Mutants," what did the U.N. do?
A) Signed a peace-treaty with him where he would not attack humanity as long as production of the Sentinels was halted
B) Contracted Stark Solutions to create a "Polarity Inhibitor" that would effectively "turn off" ALL magnetic fields for short periods of time
C) Gave him control of a country full of superpowered mutants
D) Got him some fine-lookin' hos

9 Having Gotham City ravaged by an earthquake, cut off from outside contact and its inhabitants turn to cannibalism wasn't all bad. What "new" character did "No Man's Land" introduce to the DCU?
A) Harley Quinn
B) Barbara Gordon, Batgirl
C) Terry McGinnis
D) Dee, Roj's smart-mouthed kid sister

10 What was returned to Captain America this year that made him all warm inside?
A) The "A" on his head
B) His shield
C) His Avengers status
D) His Bucky Polaroids

11 Stop the presses...an X-Man died again! But later it turned out that they weren't all-dead, just mostly dead. Anyway, who was it?
A) Wolverine
B) Gambit
C) Psylocke
D) The right answer's Wolverine, but who the hell screwed that up? It was the most anti-climactic mess this year.

12 What was the biggest revelation that happened in the pages of *Battle Chasers* this year?
A)
B)
C)
D)

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...

BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Nude at the Urinal!

That's only one of the bizarre hurdles the *Wizard* Bullpen had to overcome during Wizard Entertainment's second-annual company-wide Scavenger Hunt. As the staff broke down in to teams of four (each with names like "The Screaming Cheetah Wheelies," "Team Rocket" and "Jelly"), they had six hours to criss-cross upstate New York and track down peculiar items (three-segment unshelled peanuts, uncooked Chicken McNuggets and a proctologist appointment card, to name a few). Each team also had to take a photo of a teammate in nothing but boxers and boots by a urinal. So…any horror stories from having two men in a bathroom, one stripped almost bare-ass naked while another guy snapped Polaroids?

"We almost had a disaster with this shot," said Special Editions Editor Doug Goldstein, captain of the winning Squirrel Monkeys team. "There I am, in this tiny, crappy, dirty little McDonald's bathroom, stripped down to my shoes and jimmys. I give the signal to my teammate right outside the door that I'm ready (there was no room for him in the bathroom), and he opens the door to take the photo. He then proceeds to try to make the camera work, which it doesn't. While I'm sweating, waiting for a bus of nuns to go by (a window made me visible to the outdoors), he's futzing around. So I close the door, cursing at him, and wait until the second, and ultimately successful, attempt.

"This is what you had to do to win this," continued the overzealous Doug. "My esteemed opponents didn't realize that's the kind of energy, the kind of drive you need to win a scavenger hunt. Maybe next year they'll be better competition."

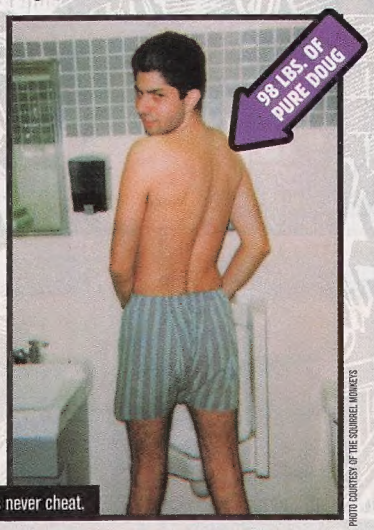

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SQUIRREL MONKEYS

CHEATERS NEVER WIN Winners never cheat.

TOP 10 daring plotlines to try since the world ends this year anyway

10 Batman gets a gun, takes out entire rogues gallery by lunch.
9 Darkchylde goes shopping for a frumpy pantsuit.
8 "Superman's Pal Who's in the Closet, Jimmy Olsen."
7 Spawn, tired of living in an alley while his best friend bangs his wife, uses his power to kill all his enemies, get a stylin' pad in L.A. and nail Katie Holmes.
6 Multiple Man encircles the globe, pees.
5 Mystique hired by Bill Gates to come over every night and "Y'know, turn into any Playmate I think of, or Jenna Elfman in a werewolf mask—whatever strikes my fancy."
4 The triumphant return of Hawkman!
3 Alfred finally says "Enough is enough!", poisons Batman's tea and enjoys his golden years.
2 The Leader secretly follows the Hulk around until he turns into Bruce Banner, BLAM!, shotgun blast to Mr. Toughguy Hulk's face. The end.
1 The Inhumans babysit cantankerous infant who finally falls asleep, but Black Bolt keeps stubbing his toe! Only from the House of Ideas!

C.B.I.Q. answers...

1. D	4. D	7. D	10. B
2. B	5. A	8. C	11. A
3. C	6. C	9. A	12. C

ONE OF THE DAMNED

DOING HARD TIME

Matthew Senreich EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

WHY WE PAY HIM "My job is to inject new excitement and enthusiasm in the publications (*Wizard, InQuest, ToyFare*) through the words, the staff and the companies we cover. And to always smile, 'cause that's what I do."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE "Keep on top of me…just keep pushing away." (Said to Jim McLauchlin while Matt was under a ton of deadline pressure.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT "I came in on the weekend and I thought I had turned the alarm off. My mistake. Fifteen minutes later as I walked out of the warehouse into the lobby after getting a Coke from the soda machine, two police officers pulled their guns and told me to freeze and drop it."

PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI

AIRPLANE "I have very bad plane experiences. Once, flying with Joe Madureira, as we're taking off, one of the engines goes BOOM! and explodes. Another time, my plane got struck by lightning."

ISLANDERS STUFF "I'm a huge Islanders fan, but I'm on sort of a sabbatical until they get better."

O.J. STUFF "A bunch of us were waiting to go out for my 20th birthday. We were watching a Bulls-Knicks playoff game when O.J. Simpson ran away from the police. Of course, we waited all night to see what would happen. That washed out any birthday plans I had."

BOX OF TISSUES "On a subway ride in Japan, the car was packed, shoulder-to-shoulder. This kid sneezed right in my face, like a rain shower. That was my last trip on the subway in Japan."

HOCKEY EQUIPMENT "During an intramural game in college, this fraternity guy checked me, and while I was down, he kicked me in the chin with his skate. Needless to say, I got revenge. He went up and OVER the boards later on in the game."

SARAN WRAP "I take full credit for Saran-Wrapping every item in the *ToyFare* office. But hit the *Wizard* Bullpen? Why would I hit *Wizard*?"

WESLEYAN SWEATSHIRT "I went to college there. 'Nuff said."

AVENGERS #273 "The first comic I ever bought. The Masters of Evil invade Avengers Mansion. And I got it on a dare that I didn't have the attention span to read a comic all the way through. Now I have almost every issue of *Avengers* from #17 on, with just a couple of gaps."

COMICS "I read everything that comes out for work, but I really enjoy *Robin, Avengers, Rising Stars, Danger Girl* and *Astro City*. Some very cool books."

MAGIC 8-BALL "Jim McLauchlin and I were a great news team. By constantly talking to creators, we got to the point where we knew what companies were doing sometimes before even they did!"

FIRST-AID KIT "Once a guy died on my plane. The stewardess found a doctor, and the two of us gave the guy CPR and brought him back. His wife tried to give me $50, which I turned down, but the pilot gave me a set of wings."

THE BIG LAST PAGE

A fun romp featuring

MATTHEW SENREICH
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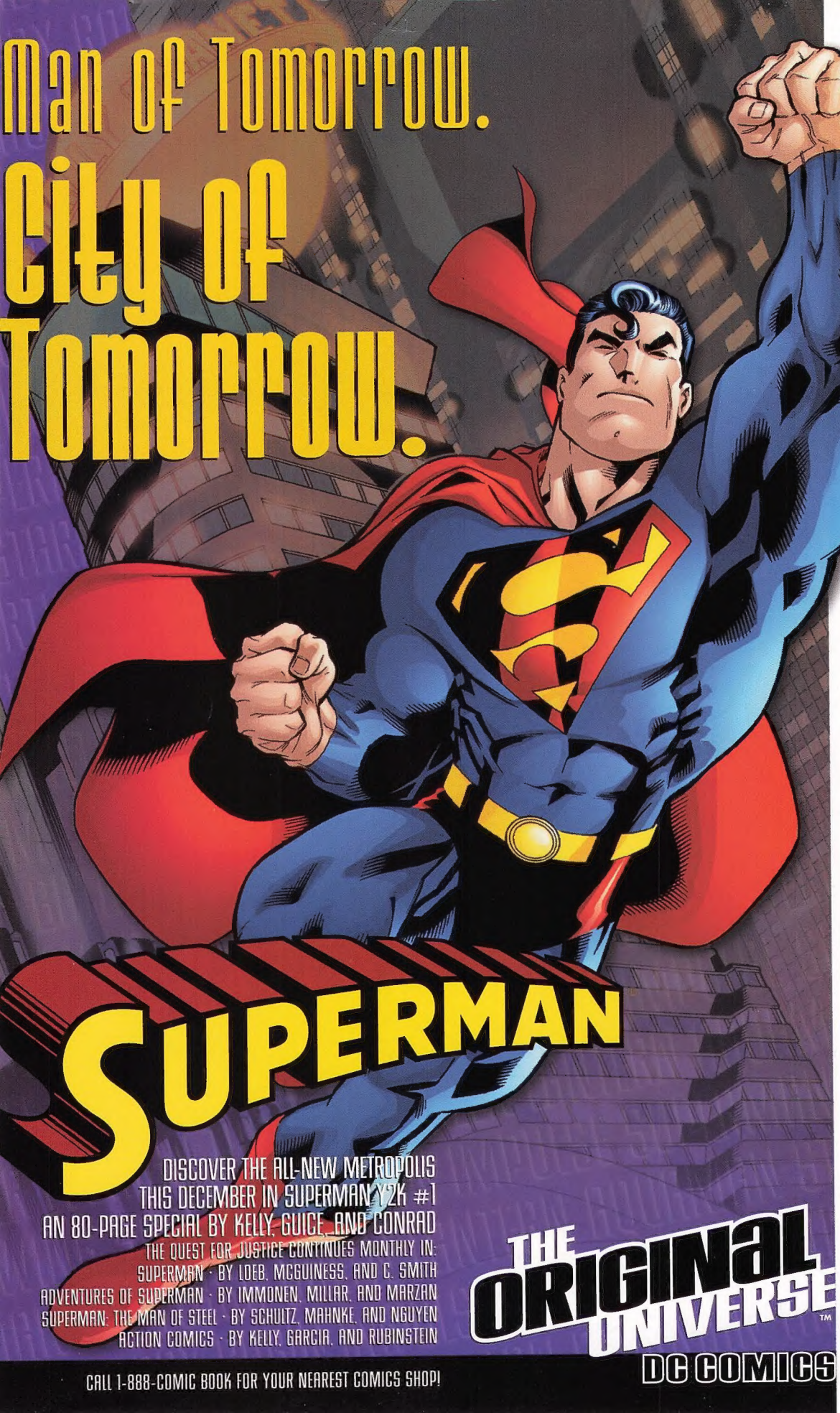

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